





OXFORD REPLANNED

by THOMAS SHARP



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The Replanning Committee

Members of Town Planning Committee during period of Mr. Sharp's engagement as Planning Consultant
Municipal Year, 1944-5

The Mayor, ex-officio (Councillor R. P. Capel).

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Vice-Chairman—Alderman G. M. Harris, O.B.E., M.A.

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Aldermen: H. T. Gillett, M.D. (Lond.), M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.; Mrs. P. M. Stevenson, M.A.; S. Smith, J.P.

*Councillors: A. B. Brown, B.C.L., M.A.; E. Colegrove; F. F. Cripps; W. O. Hart, C.M.G., J.P., B.C.L., M.A.; H. C. Ingle, M.A.;
W. O. King (Sheriff); K. C. Wheare, M.A.*



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PREFATORY NOTE



In May 1945 the Oxford City Council instructed me to prepare a report on the planning and development of the city.

The task has proved to be an onerous one, and now that it is completed I cannot with certainty expect that the result will be generally acceptable even in its main features, let alone in all its details. Indeed I know very well that some of the suggestions I make will rouse bitter opposition in some quarters. But, whatever one may suggest, that is unavoidable in a city where there are so many strong and opposing interests. If I had allowed my mind to dwell on them, both the responsibility of advancing proposals which will, perhaps, leave their mark for good or ill on this old and famous city, and the powerful nature of the possible opposition to them, might well have so intimidated me that it might have seemed better to play for safety. But I have not attempted to play for safety. With a full sense of the responsibility that has been placed on me, I have suggested whatever measures seem to me to be necessary, without regard to the power of those who may be affected by them. I hope that the City Council may take a similar course. And I hope that what I suggest may show that I am in no way a partisan in the internecine struggle which still goes on in Oxford, though probably in a lesser degree than of old: for I am neither pro-town, pro-gown, pro-dungaree, nor pro- any

other special interest at all (nor, indeed, anti- any interest): I am, as I hope the following pages may show, quite simply pro-Oxford.

I have not, of course, been able in this report to deal with all the thousand and one things that need to be done to make Oxford a better city. That would have been too great a task. In the main, the plan which I submit is an outline plan only. While I have thought it necessary to deal with certain matters in some detail, especially matters affecting the historical city, many affecting the middle and outer city I have dealt with only in very broad terms. And many I have not dealt with at all. The field of town-planning is too wide to be fully covered in a report which is merely an outline of a particular broad plan and which makes no claim at all to be a general text-book.

Though I can hardly hope that anyone will remember what I have written elsewhere, I must ask indulgence for the few occasions when, in connexion with the enunciation of broad principles of planning, I have used phrases, and on pp. 156-65 certain longer passages, which I have used in other books. There is a limit to the number of times one can put old principles into new words. But I hope that my having occasionally done this does not mean that I have been guilty of the sin of lazily applying stereotyped notions to this anything but stereotyped city.

THOMAS SHARP

Oxford, March 1947

FRONTISPIECE

There is probably no place-name in the world that carries so many emotional overtones as the name OXFORD. The range is from love to hate. Though for internal purposes town and university are more or less separate, they cannot be so regarded by the outsider. Oxford is Oxford; and despite anything that the old and the new industrial revolutions have been able to do, it has maintained its individuality more truly than any other city in England. That is why people feel more personally about Oxford than about Birmingham or Manchester, which also have universities. Nor are these feelings confined to the citizens and members of the University. Oxford is felt to be a public figure; and the right to hold an opinion about it is claimed by people who have never even visited the place. Such an interest can only be produced by something that is very much alive. Most centres of population are not so much alive as all that. It is this kind of aliveness (not to be confused with mere noise and bustle) that the town planner must make it his business to cultivate. In Oxford it has not to be cultivated but safeguarded. Though difficult in practice, in

The City from the east, 1808

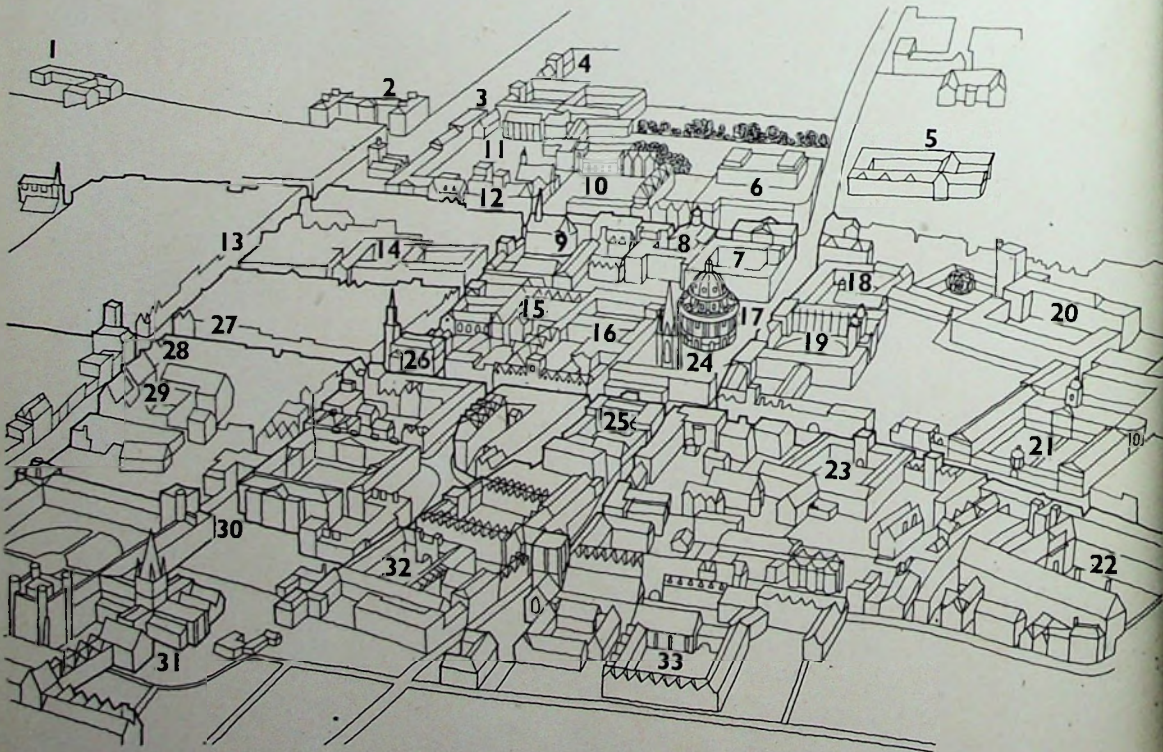


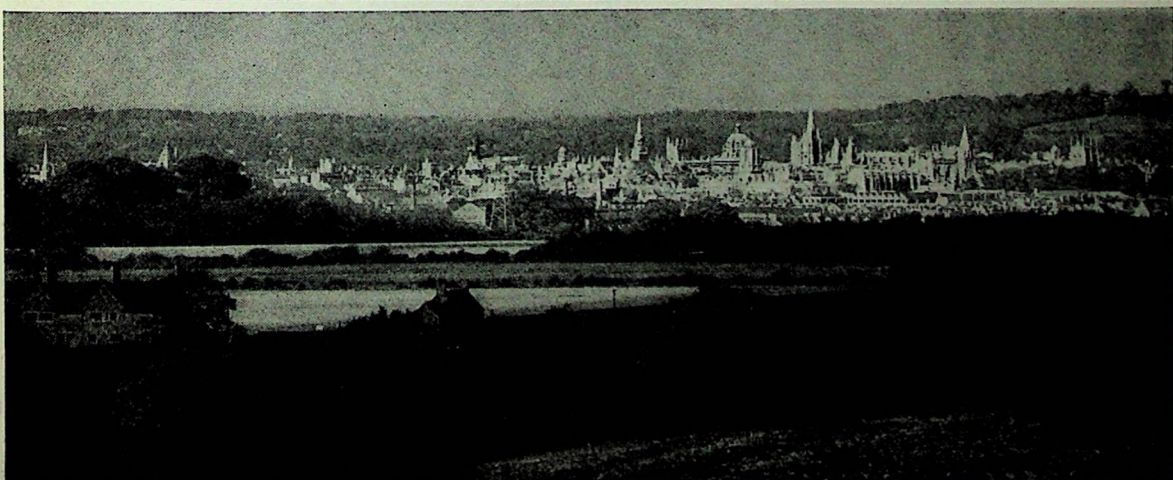
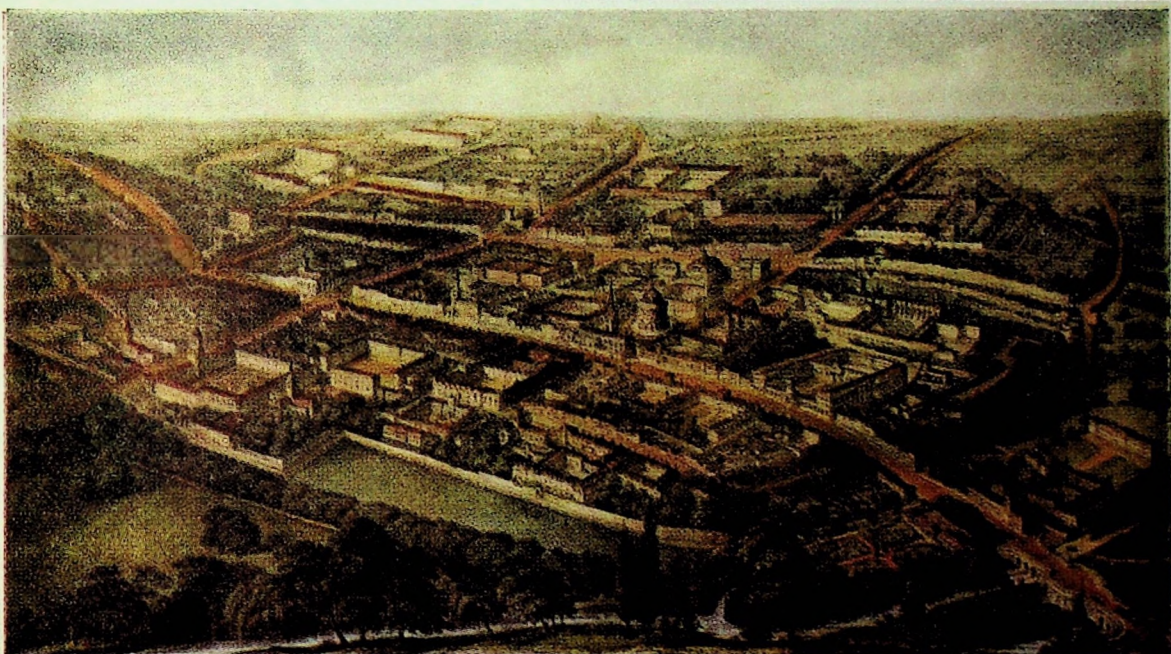
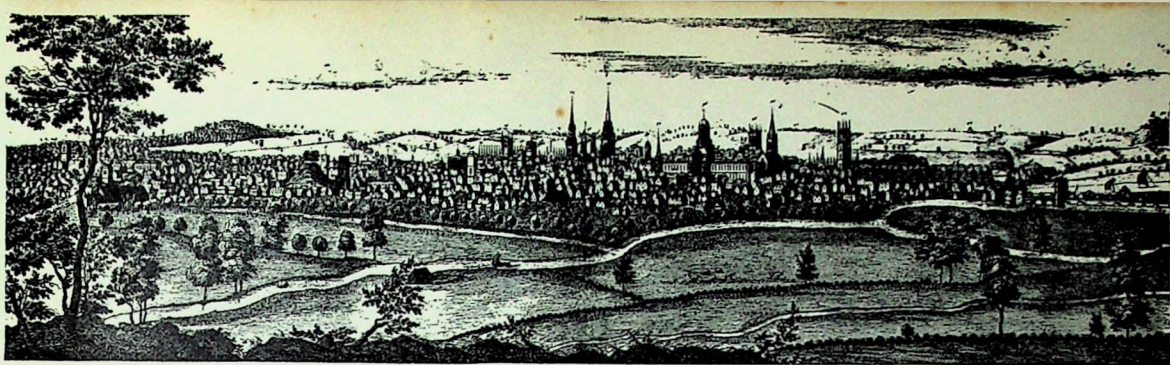


theory the planner's job here is a simple one: to unravel for purposes of classification the various functional activities that modern Oxford engages in; to mark with a blue tab those that are traditional, with a yellow tab those that are new, with a red tab those that are potentially disruptive of the structure of the place. This might be described as largely a work of preservation: and the layman may wonder why a plan should be called for, for this purpose. The answer, of course, is that planning is not simply a machinery for incubating brave new worlds; it is a technique which provides that new developments, when they are necessary, shall not disrupt ancient practices or traditional forms where those are good. In the case of Oxford one piece of surgery is required to relieve the city from a pressure on its spinal column which will otherwise eventually paralyse it—the rest consists largely of building up safeguards, restoring lost amenities, rehabilitating old functions that have been compromised, and facilitating (in so far as they are not seriously damaging to the city's main purposes) new functions and new institutions which modern conditions of living call into being.

Below: a key diagram to the air-view on the previous two pages

- | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Worcester College | 10 Trinity College | 18 Hertford College | 26 All Saints' Church |
| 2 Ashmolean Museum | 11 Balliol College | 19 All Souls College | 27 High Street |
| 3 St. Giles' Street | 12 Broad Street | 20 New College | 28 Carfax |
| 4 St. John's College | 13 Cornmarket Street | 21 The Queen's College | 29 Town Hall |
| 5 Wadham College | 14 Jesus College | 22 Examination Schools | 30 Christ Church |
| 6 New Bodleian | 15 Lincoln College | 23 University College | 31 Cathedral |
| 7 Old Bodleian, etc. | 16 Brasenose College | 24 St. Mary's Church | 32 Corpus Christi College |
| 8 Sheldonian Theatre | 17 Radcliffe Camera | 25 Oriel College | 33 Merton College |
| 9 Exeter College | | | |







MUTABILITY

The permanent-looking streets and quadrangles of Oxford are very solid. But it is worth reminding ourselves that buildings are highly vulnerable. In the course of a few centuries buildings are subjected to enormous risks—of fire, human inconstancy, acts of God, change of use, movements of population, neglect, war. Within the last three hundred years Oxford has been a fortress besieged; within the last thirty an academic redoubt surrounded by an automobile industry; within the last ten a target for bombs. Only a whim of luck has saved it from the fate of Coventry or Exeter. The air view below is an actual German photograph taken of North Oxford for use by German bombers. Though the raid was planned, the bombs never fell. But the risks go on—other kinds of risk. To-day a heavy concentration of traffic is threatening to break down the entire organization of Oxford as a centre of civilized life.

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Nur für den Dienstgebrauch

Bild Nr. 892b/40-004 (Lfl. 3)

Aufnahme vom 24. 9. 40

Oxford

Kühlerfabrik „Morris-Motors Ltd.“

Länge (westl. Greenw.): 1° 16' 10" Breite: 51° 46' 21"

MiBweisung: — 11° 03' (Mitte 1940) Zielhöhe über NN 61 m

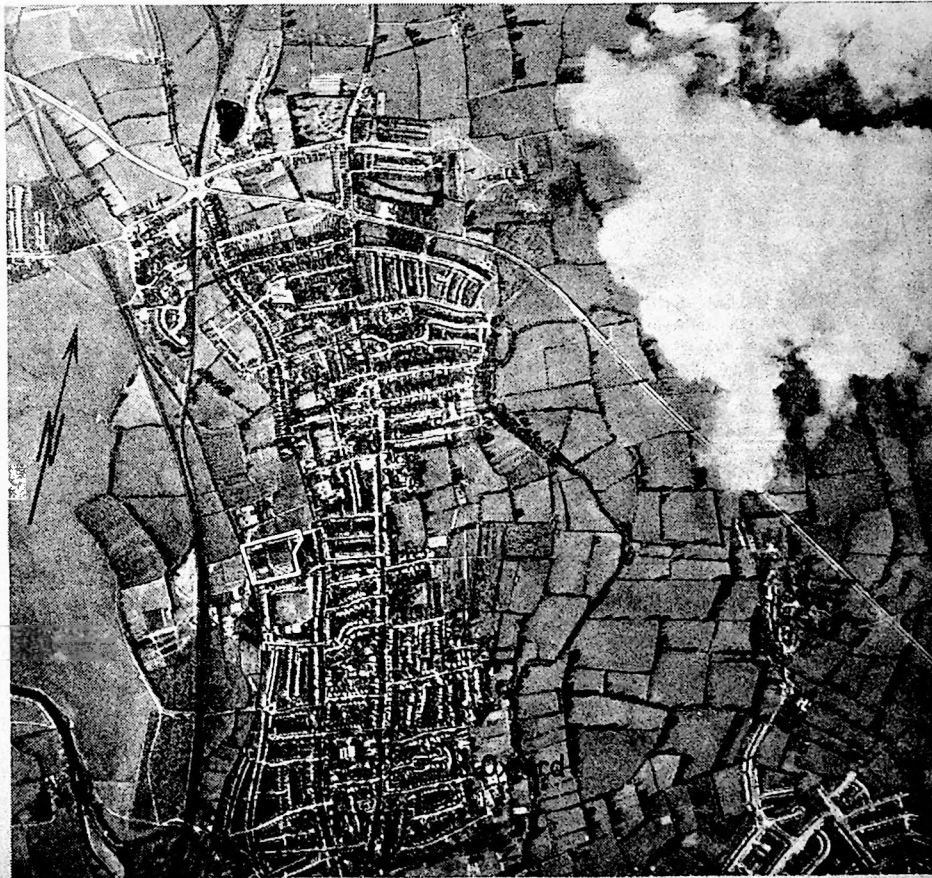
Maßstab etwa 1 : 16 700

Genst. 5. Abl.

April 1941

Karte 1 : 100 000

GB/E 28





High Street 1804

HIGH STREET

The High Street is the perfect subject for railway-carriage photography. Its very familiarity makes it difficult to appraise. Probably its effect of completeness depends only a little on the architectural quality of its individual buildings, since by European standards few are of the very front rank. It is the relationships between them, either of harmony or complement, that have produced a great and homogeneous work of art. These harmonious groupings of dissimilar elements are generally put down to a happy accident; and, in so far as English aesthetic processes tend to take place below the level of consciousness, perhaps they are. But it is exactly these processes and the results they produce which constitute whatever is unique in the English genius. It is precisely here that the English character differs from the European—and, as for that, from the Scottish, Irish, and Welsh. Here, in creating a sort of art which in its informality of effect, its hospitality towards foreign elements, its capacity for ringing emotional changes—for dumping the Sublime alongside the Ordinary and making them both enjoy it—England has produced something different. Of this art the High Street at Oxford is the supreme architectural example. Not by any means knocking the stranger over with surprise tactics, it gains its end by a sort of casual splendour that only sinks in by degrees. But the victory is complete. There is dignity without formality; an aptitude for making lofty, even sublime, statements without a false or pompous manner; an amiable austerity; an immense variety of incident within a broad general effect. And this miracle of harmony-in-conflict is sustained in a series of well-punctuated instalments for three-quarters of a mile on one side of a street curving broadly like a great river.

In the next few pages the whole panorama of the north side of High Street is shown complete. The reader is asked to forget his familiarity and to look at it afresh. Here is the greatest and most typical work of art England possesses—too big, fortunately, to go into any museum. And this is a good moment to look, for since Jackson's Brasenose buildings have now begun to gain patina, High Street is entering into one of its great periods.

Unfortunately there is a snag. It is not much of an exaggeration to say that, except

at sunrise and full moon, High Street is almost invisible. The whole centre of Oxford has become like an old garden in which circumstances have decreed that an Army manoeuvre must take place. The atmosphere of philosophic, of collegiate calm, which is the traditional characteristic of a university town, has been obliterated by a kind of free-for-all in which works' buses and public buses, 5-ton trucks, chains of motor-car bodies, 60-foot lorries, vans, motor coaches, and private cars thunder between vibrating college buildings. The University has become the scene of a titanic traffic battle because High Street is still the only channel of communication between various parts of the city and of the country. It is fantastic that this should be so, for not only is that street one of the world's great works of art, it is the backbone of university life, just as Cornmarket Street is the backbone of the city's life. The colleges are arranged about High Street like organs about a spinal column; in fact it might almost be regarded as a kind of elongated quadrangle. Indeed in the past, as illustrations in this book show, High Street was treated very much like a super-quad, in the middle of which aged dons could meet to argue a point in ethics. To-day the planner is confronted with the problem of restoring this balance in so far as the life of a modern county town allows. This is in fact the first and greatest of his tasks.

THE PANORAMA

The panorama opens from a point between the poplars on Magdalen Bridge. The High Street is seen curving away to the left past Magdalen Tower and College. At all the usual hours the Bridge is filled with fast-moving traffic and this view is difficult to get.





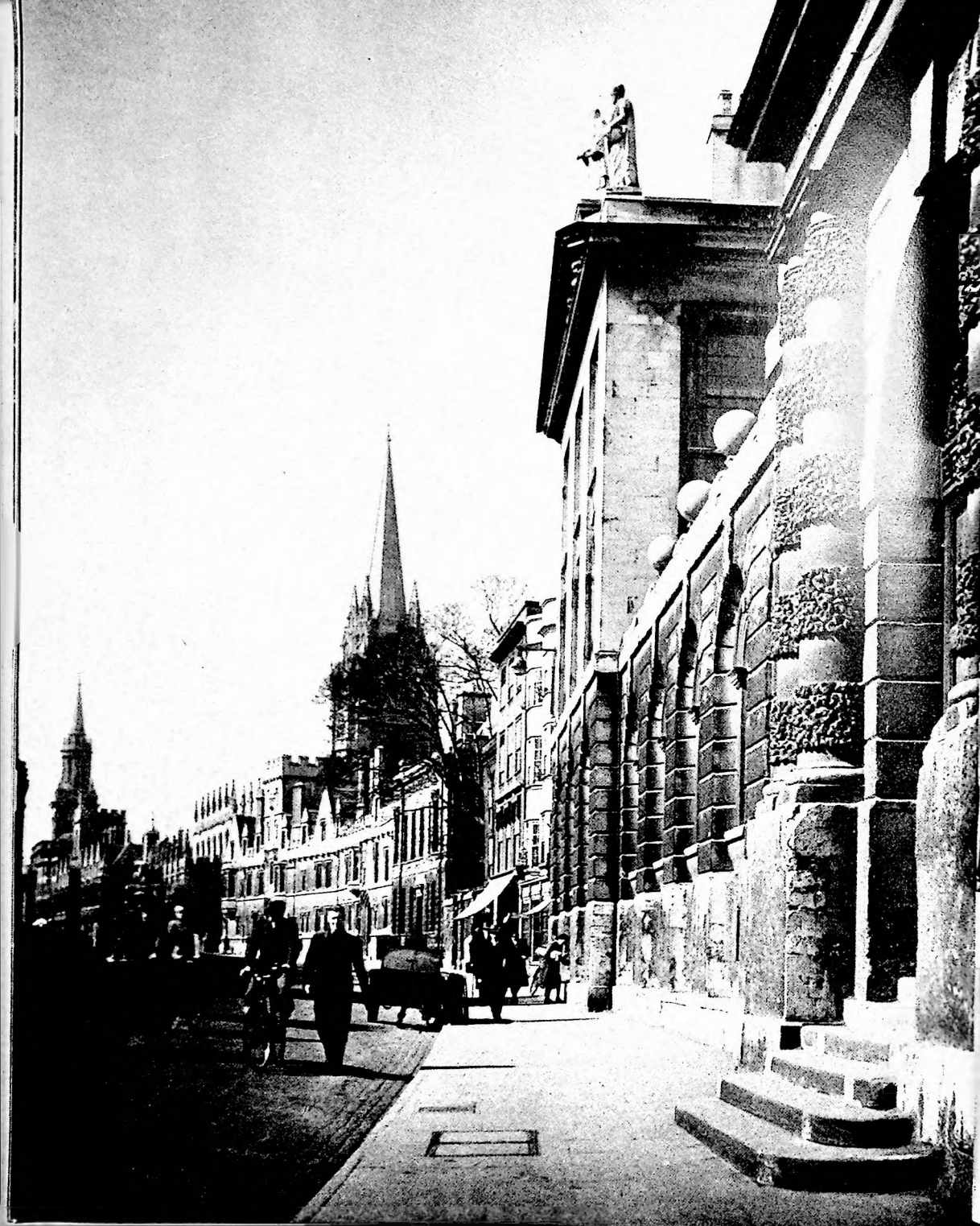
Above: The viewpoint moves along High Street as far as Longwall Street at the western end of Magdalen, and the sweep of the north side is now visible as far as Queen's College. Below: From Queen's looking back along the same sweep to the first piece of Magdalen





Above: Still by Queen's, but now looking on past All Souls College as far as St. Mary's Church. Below: From St. Mary's looking back to Queen's. The tree between All Souls and Queen's is one of the most important in the world: without it this scene would suffer greatly.







Left: The viewpoint is from Queen's again, still from the north side of the street. Now the spire of All Saints' Church is visible beyond St. Mary's and All Souls. Above: The viewpoint moves across to the south side opposite All Souls. This slight change of position irons out the fine bend of the street: but it produces another kind of monumental effect.



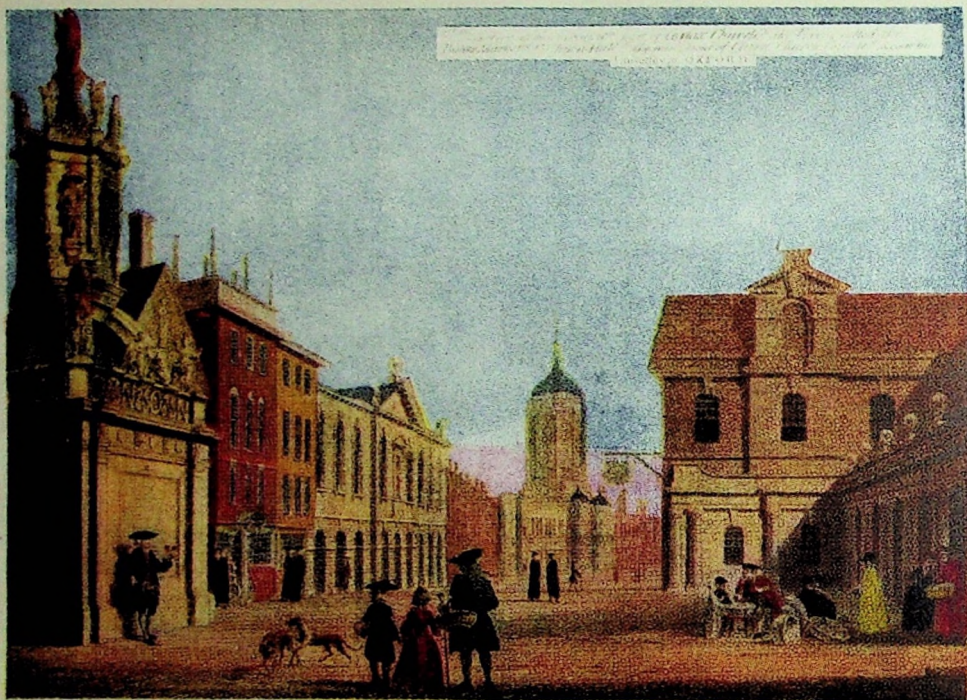
The panorama ends with Carfax. Above: The scene photographed to give the fullest possible dramatic effect. Below: The necessities of traffic produce something much less interesting.



TRAFFIC

With Carfax (opposite) the panorama of the High Street ends. The two photographs on the opposite page are placed together because they tell the real story. The upper one is the idealized picture—brilliantly evoked by the camera. The lower one is the unfortunate reality, tarmac, traffic lights, islands, traffic signs, standards, nervous pedestrians, impatient things on wheels. Somewhere behind all this is the good stuff that is Oxford. But it has become engulfed. Below, on this page, the process is shown at work. First the background, Magdalen Bridge; then the new and dangerous invention of the eighties, the bicycle. Bicycles came in hordes, like locusts, upon the university towns. At the turn of the century the most







defend himself by learning to be always on his guard against any open space that isn't sown with grass. To-day heavy traffic breaks up what once was an urban paradise into a crowd of islands surrounded by vehicular torrents. As a result the measured life of a university town which is so movingly depicted on pages 28, 29, and on the page opposite (top) has ceased to exist, or exists in pockets as blitzed citizens exist in cellars. Now the people of Oxford wait in queues for the buses that wait in queues.

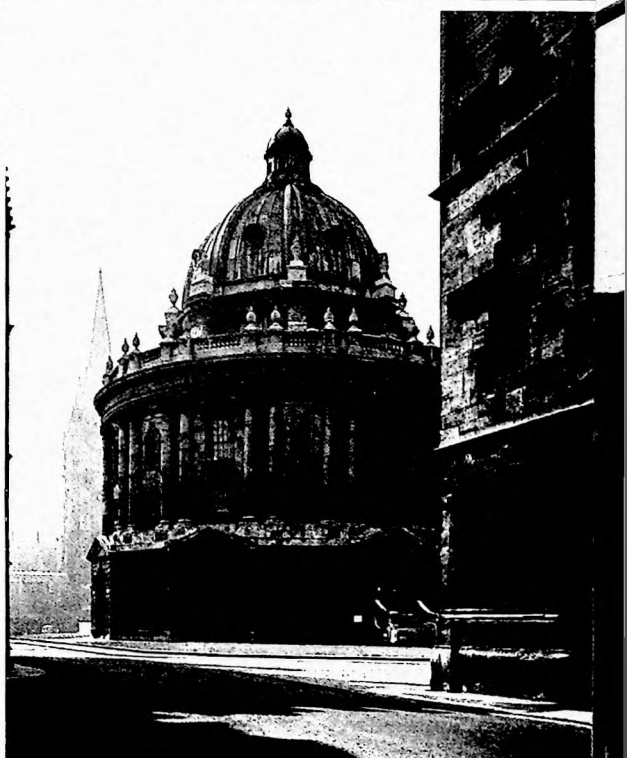
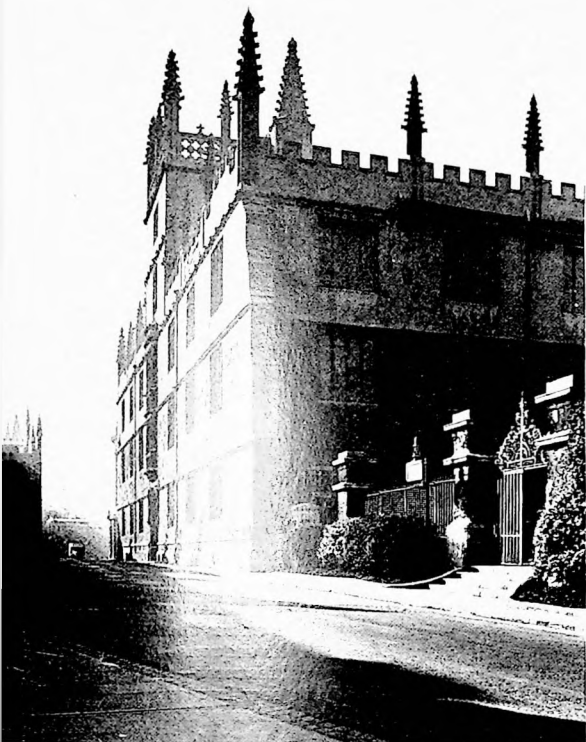


MOVING TARGET

In one of the islands left by the traffic torrents is to be found the greatest architectural sequence in England. It is also amongst the most famous: and there would be no point in referring to it were it not that it provides an important illustration of a fact that is not popularly taken into account—the fact that though buildings stand still, their observers move. Because most urban scenery is not worth looking at anyway, this fact is usually of no significance. At Oxford it matters enormously. A building is usually conceived as a three-dimensional still-life. But for practical purposes it is in fact always in movement (the fact that the movement belongs to the observer and not to the building is incidental). The important thing is that as the observer moves the building alters, not only in the relation of one part to another, but in relation to its environment. Thus, whether or not we admit it consciously, our architectural experience is mostly kinetic, the result of a complicated resolution of changing relations. When this is appreciated, quite ordinary incidents in the urban scene, the interpolation, for instance, of the body of a double-decker bus between the observer and his visual target, begin to take on a new significance. On the kinetic view the bus is a disaster, though one that we have no choice but to tolerate in an ordinary commercial environment. As it happens no bus at present endangers the approach to the Radcliffe from the Bodleian, and the observer is fairly safe in concentrating his attention on the scene which unfolds. As he approaches the Bodleian from the top of Catte Street, there is nothing to be seen but its noble cube. Advancing, he sees first the rotunda, then the spire of St. Mary's, then the dome of the Radcliffe coming into view. As this vast circular bulk separates from the Bodleian, the tower of St. Mary's also emerges. Despite the fact that each of the three buildings is in its own way as sophisticated a piece of architecture as there is, the experience is elemental, beyond the power of words or photographs to describe. Cube, cylinder, and cone are suddenly juxtaposed, or rather suddenly deploy the one from the other, with a result that is, architecturally speaking, sensational. In a country where building does not always rise to architecture, and where the architecture is generally merely pleasant, a first-class aesthetic experience such as this is to be treated with awe.

The sequence of the views opposite as described in the text, is:

1	2
3	4



TOWNSCAPE

If one can agree to discard the old conception which sees the urban scene as a series of stills and learn to regard it as a *mobile*—a moving visual target—in which the constituent motifs constantly reassemble under their own power, as it were, so that their capacity for forming fresh and stimulating combinations becomes nearly infinite, one begins to get an idea of the possibilities of the art of civic design. One also gets an idea of the qualities of mind and eye that have gone to create Oxford. A book can only deal in terms of stills and is therefore at a disadvantage, but it is worth going through the sequence of High Street again to notice how the same architectural features—the façade of Queen's, for instance—keep cropping up in new frames of reference. This far from ostentatious building dominates a dozen different situations. What can happen to the frame when a key-motif of that sort is abstracted is seen in the two views of St. Giles opposite. St. Giles to-day has high trees and high lamp-standards, both of the scale typical of Oxford (the latter showing how easily and thoughtlessly a noble vista can be ruined): yet for some reason the Martyrs' Memorial, also of a certain scale, fails to complete the picture. For the missing element one has to take a trip into history which reveals, in a print of 1820, the precisely right motif in the shape of a four-gabled house fronting straight down the street with the tower of St. Mary Magdalen peeking over its shoulder. Perhaps

No-style and Style: Park End Street (below) and Longwall Street (right) see p. 36





Top: St. Giles to-day.
Bottom: St. Giles, 1820.

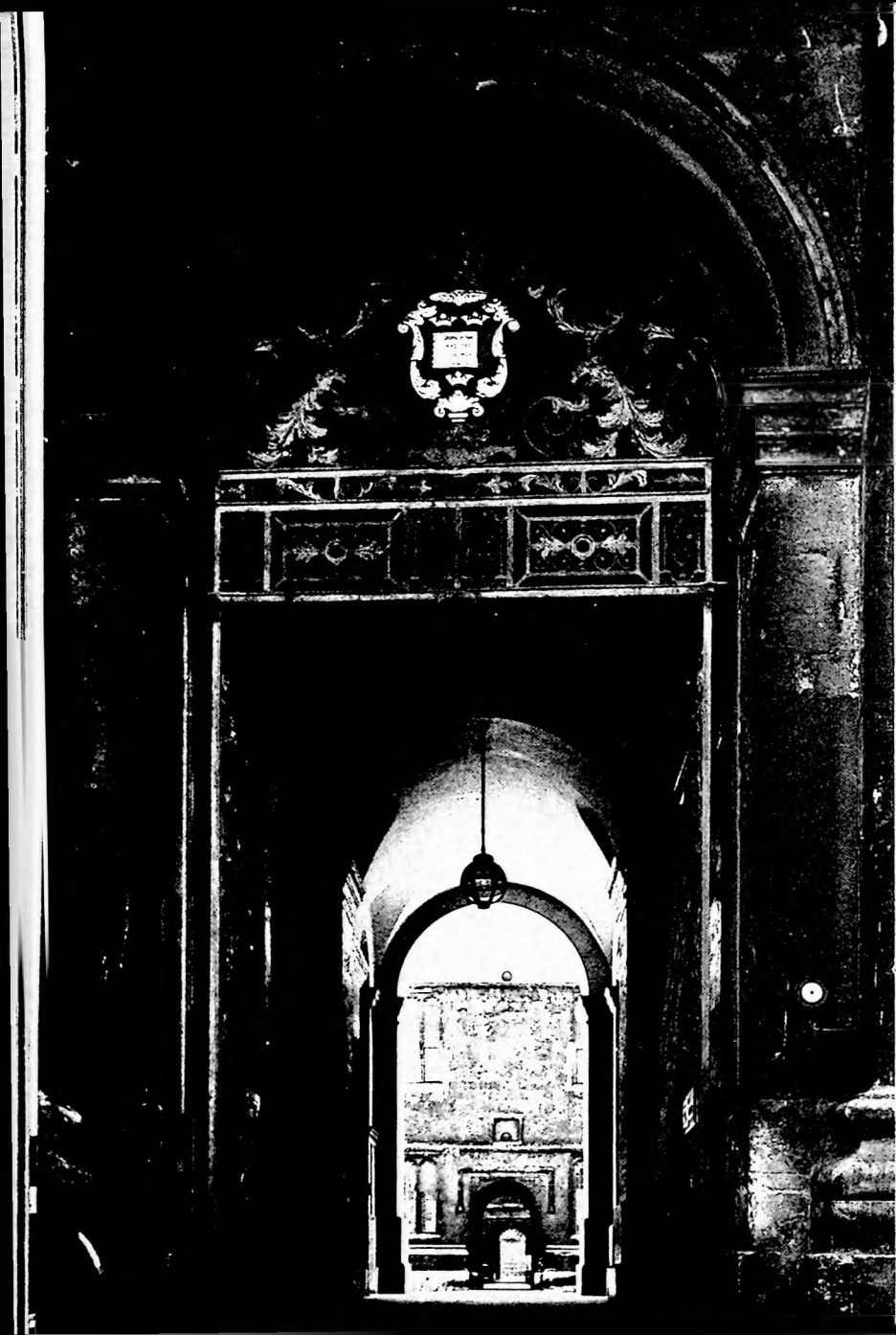


other obvious gaps in the contemporary scene could be filled from history; they denote the absence of some key-motif whose place has never been reoccupied. Gaps, however, can be made good by those who understand their business. To-day we are attending the rebirth of an art which is of significance to the whole community. It has the virtue that it can be practised by anyone who has a weakness for architecture or a personal interest in a given town. By an analogy with an equivalent art practised by the eighteenth-century Improver of land (we, after all, are Improvers of cities) it might be christened **TOWNSCAPE**.

Always remembering that a town is a mobile thing, that streets, like buildings, *move* as one is drawn through them even if one is drawn on one's feet, whereas a photograph records a static object, it would be worth considering every illustration in this book on its merit as a piece of Townscape. In the sense that the art of Townscape has always been practised without overt acknowledgement it is, of course, not a new art at all. Yet an art that is not consciously admitted remains incipient. Brought into consciousness, Townscape reveals possibilities which may conceivably make of it the representative art of this epoch. Of the illustrations shown here comparison between the two on p. 34 reveals the importance of 'style' in a street; Park End Street looks very tentative beside the handsome curve of Longwall Street—and incidentally demonstrates how mistaken it is to go 'neo-Georgian' in the hope of being in good taste. Where a street does not lend itself to curves, it can, of course, build up to a focal point like Tom Tower. In the illustrations opposite Cornmarket Street is shown with and without Tom Tower. The point is made here, however, not to emphasize the value of a focal point but to emphasize the difference between Townscape and town planning in its Beaux-Arts aspect. The bottom illustrations opposite and the one on p. 64 show a pleasing subtlety in the siting of Tom Tower which demonstrates the difference between an official focal point and a vital object in the street scene. By an accident of contour, as one approaches Carfax up Cornmarket Street, the base of Christ Church and Tom Tower remains masked below the horizon of the roadway so that the upper part seems to float, or rise—a full-bottom wiggled Venus rising from Isis. Somewhat the same effect is got of St. James's Palace from Albemarle Street in London. Although, unfortunately, the full aspect of this charming nuance can only be appreciated very early in the morning



Three views of
Cornmarket St.
looking south.



Collegiate landscape:
View through the arches
of the Chancel Building

before the traffic thickens, whoever can appreciate it is beginning to taste the pleasures of urban landscape.

More subtle than the focal point is the modification of alignment by which a street provides its own focal point—closes its own vista—by the simple expedient of placing one of its more distant arms athwart the axis. At its best this should have an entirely accidental air. A text-book example is to be found at All Souls (below) where the backcloth is provided by the oblique façade of Cotte Street which has the effect of a piece of stage scenery casually left lying about. Again a faint change in ground levels cuts off the base of the distant buildings so that the floor of the street itself is mysteriously and provocatively absent. Compared with such delicate visual pleasures the practice of French, American, and Royal Academy town planners in 'Haussmannizing' a city is brutal, trite, and forlorn. And notice the tremendous character given to this scene by the exotic, almost succulent, growths of this queer Collegiate Gothic. Hawksmore knew what he was about as well as Gibbs.

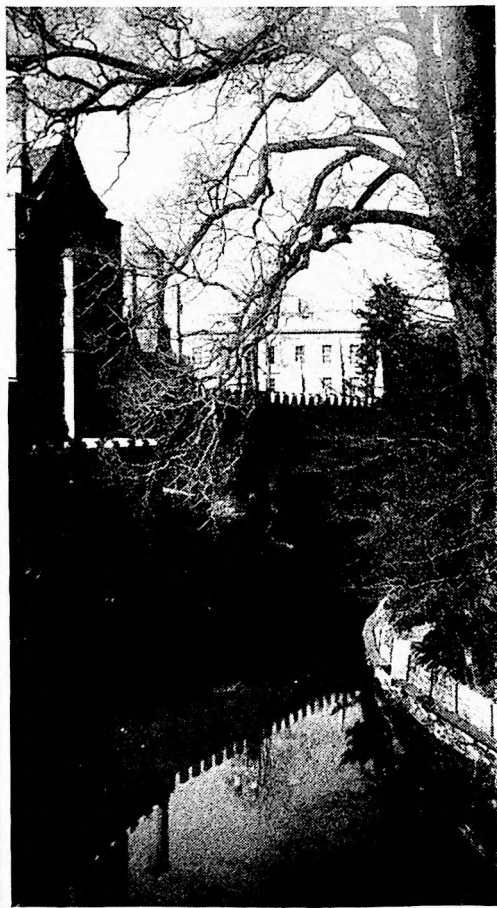
The Radcliffe, Bodleian, and All Souls from Cotte Street.



Below, left: Magpie Lane, looking north. Below, right: Magdalen. Opposite: Magpie Lane, looking south.

BACKS

It is not, of course, to be supposed that all that matters to a street is the way its vista is closed. Its own particular character depends on the way it shapes at its job. In a university city there is a very specialized type of street, which, because it plays an important part in the set-up, ought to be recorded. It might be described as a Back. The word 'Backs' in its university-city connotation is generally associated with water, especially with the Cam and Cambridge; but in fact normal collegiate development, where the buildings face inwards across a quad, creates a whole series of Backs. The Oxford Back has certain special characteristics, a narrow tunnel-like quality, a shady disposition, a tendency to be frowned upon by blank walls, to be cobbled, to have a crooked figure, and to debouch suddenly into an open space full of sunshine. Not very promising to the sound perhaps; yet Backs, as everyone who knows Oxford cannot but appreciate, may create the most exquisite of effects. An example of the difference between a Back and a mere street can be seen in the view from the open place at the foot







King Edward Street.

of Oriel Street (above). Two streets, King Edward Street (left) and upper Oriel Street (right), stand in relation the one to the other exactly as they are represented by the positions of the illustrations. But whereas Oriel Street, overshadowed by the steeple of St. Mary's, is a perfect example of the ideal Back, King Edward



Street, though hygienic and superior according to Victorian standards, has succeeded in losing everything there was to be lost—a warning to those who, with the best intentions but with little imagination, would clean up all the dark places of a town and make all the crooked ways straight.

Oriel Street.

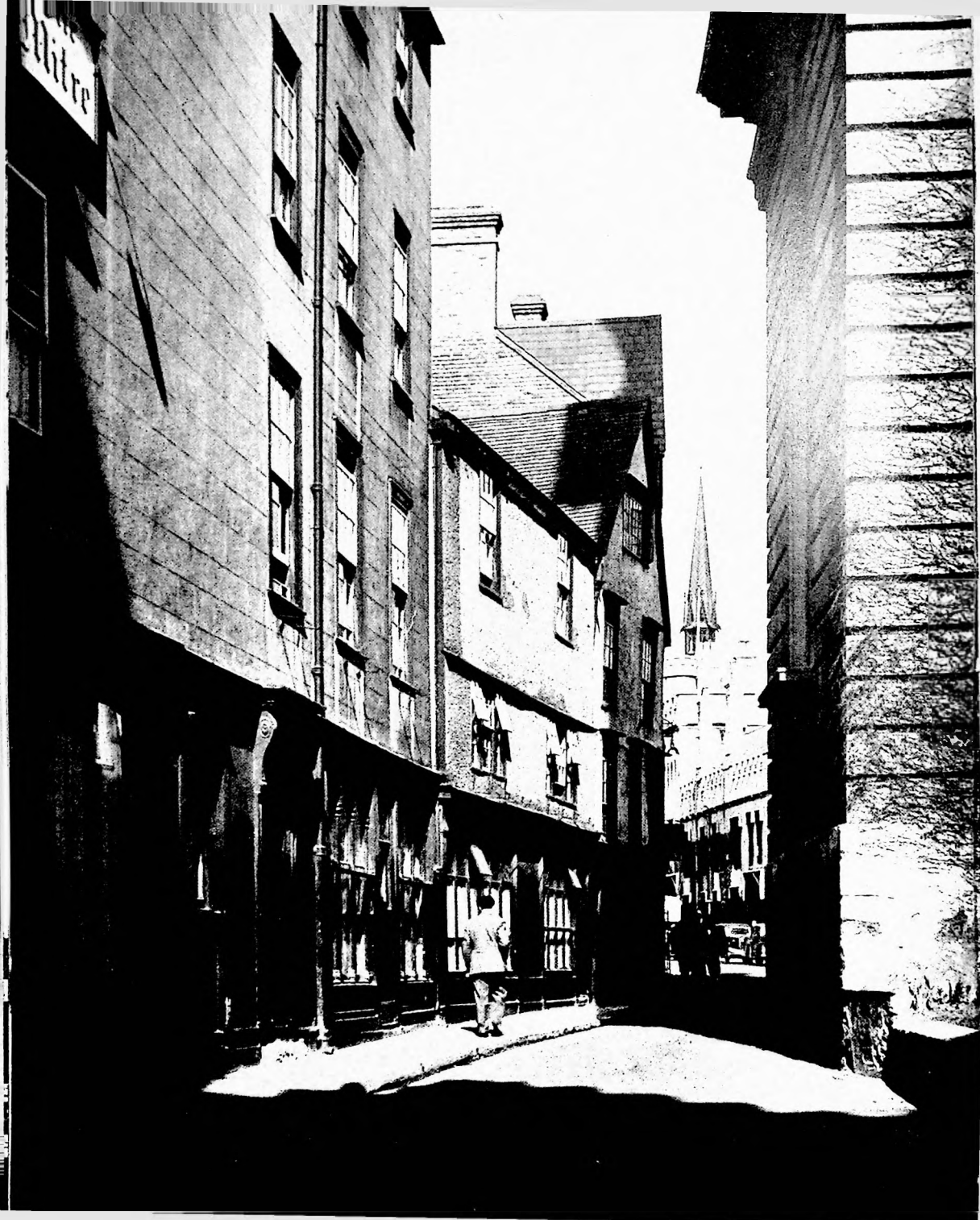
FOILS

Much of the charm of an Oxford Back lies in its contrast with the wider and more formal streets. In other words it is a foil ('foil: to enhance by contrast; anything that sets something off by contrast'—*Concise Oxford Dictionary*). It should not be thought that a Foil is merely a bit of quaintness. It has nothing to do with quaintness as such. But it has everything to do with picturesqueness in its true sense, not the trivial sense that it is generally given nowadays. The Foil is one of the supremely important elements in Civic design. And its importance is shown in Oxford as in no other place in Britain and few other places in the world. It is an essential ingredient of the Oxford urban scenery: without it the city would be something quite different: something far less Oxford and far less beautiful. The special importance of it in historical Oxford lies in the existence of the great concentration of large-unit buildings there (i.e. the colleges). Even a metropolis like London has no concentration to compare with that. A mass of large-unit buildings, unrelieved by smaller units for contrast, would, as it were, cancel itself out. Instead of being grand it would be merely monstrous. Without the Foils to the big blocks of the colleges which it possesses in such streets as Bath Place (below), Turl Street (opposite and over-page), and Ship Street, Oxford would be infinitely poorer. To pull down Ship Street, for example, and put up a great single-unit building there, as has been authoritatively proposed, would be a bigger architectural crime than to pull down one of the old colleges themselves. These Foils are quite as important, in an architectural sense, as the buildings they foil. If this book produces no other effect whatever than a realization of this in official quarters, then it will have done something immensely worth while.



Right: Bath Place.
Opposite and over-
leaf: Turl Street.





1

THE PRESENT CITY

§ I. PHYSICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

Oxford has been described in many books, evoked in many poems, delineated in many pictures. None of those that have been published during the last thirty or forty years gives, or indeed tries to give, the *whole* Oxford. That is not, perhaps, very surprising. For six hundred years and more the name Oxford called up a vision of a 'home of learning nestling grey among the elm-surrounded meadows'—a vision that even then was a distorted one if it shut out, as it generally did, the citizens' home which had nestled here long before the scholars came. It is partly because of habit, maybe, that the vision continues. It is also partly because it is easy to close the eyes to what one does not wish to see. But even in Oxford the part is less than the whole; and noble and famous though the University may be, it is still, as it always was, less than the city that surrounds and includes it.

Poets are generally more truthful and come nearer to reality than writers of guide books and draughtsmen. One or two of these to-day acknowledge that Oxford has changed since the time when that most evocative of poems *The Scholar Gipsy* was written. John Betjeman, for example, though he has not described in verse the fate that has overtaken

*... the lone homestead on the Cumnor hills,
Where at her open door the housewife darns,*

or what has happened

In Autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood,

and at other places whose very names are music in Arnold's verse, nevertheless celebrates a very different Oxford from that of the dreaming spires. It is of North Oxford that Mr. Betjeman writes; of

*Pink may, double may, dead laburnum,
Shedding an Anglo-Jackson shade*

along the Woodstock and Banbury Roads and the roads that run off them. And it is of this, too, that Robert Graves writes, less nostalgically but perhaps more accurately, in his architectural progress *Northwards from Oxford*, when he passes from Beaumont Street—where

... the eighteenth century curves up, broadly from Worcester College—

to Banbury Road, with its

*Red brick and gables, Gothic spires, freestone and knick-knackery,
Steep narrow stairs, dark kitchens, the greenhouse, the rockery.*

These poets at least, then, have added another bit of Oxford to the more celebrated central bit, have added North Oxford to the University. But, even with this, the Oxford that is most generally known outside its own boundaries, and indeed to a good many within them, especially in senior common rooms, is still a mere fraction of the modern city. And the plain planner, writing neither poetry nor a guide book, and making drawings to illustrate an intention accurately rather than merely to please, must look at the whole Oxford of to-day and acknowledge the bad (and the drab bad as well as the romantic bad; and, most plentiful of all, the middling and the mediocre) along with the good.

The good is well known enough. And it deserves to be. No praise can be too high for it. Crammed on a few acres in the old city is a collection of living buildings which, in the size of its concentration as well as in its quality, is one of the noblest achievements the world can show. Any one of these buildings would give distinction to an ordinary city. Here a hundred crowd together in a small space. And lest their very bulk and concentration should overawe, an interplay of contrast and liveliness is provided among them by the homely gaiety of quiet domestic streets. There are street scenes of a noble scale. High Street is one of the great streets of the world. St. Giles, that wide tree-shaded street, with a church at each end, has its nobility too. (And so should Broad Street have, had not last century's Balliol and Exeter frontages and this century's New Bodleian introduced such periods of dullness as no street of this length could hope to survive.) But essentially the spirit of Oxford-the-university-city lives in the narrow lanes and side-streets that lie off the main thoroughfares: lanes and streets whose very names distil the informal quality of the place—Turl Street, Magpie Lane, Cattle Street, Logic Lane, and the rest. And it lives especially, of course, in the quadrangles and gardens behind the great frontages. For in spite of the architectural riches that the streets themselves show, greater riches lie inside. In this Oxford is very different from a certain other place whose name it would be invidious to mention. That place displays most of its riches open-handed for all to see. Oxford is rather more secretive: more inward-looking. Here is an altogether richer range of pursuit, penetration, and apprehension. First the wide streets—High Street, St. Giles, Broad Street, St. Aldate's. Then the little lanes. And then from the little lanes, a turn through a narrow archway into a front quad, and then beyond that and to right and to left into other quads, into cloisters, little gardens, perhaps even a deer park. That is the essence of the architecture of the university city of Oxford. Great nobility, great beauty, in a small space. But not beauty paraded, displayed, made obvious. Rather, a retiring and reticent beauty—and one which for that very reason holds, in its intricacy, far greater delights and more enduring riches than it could possibly have were its appeal more open-handed and immediate.

In spite of the intimacy of its character, in spite of the domestic airs which mingle with the graces of learning among the university buildings (or, more strictly, the college buildings), the main streets of central Oxford are the main streets of a true city, not those of a town, even a large town. The scale here is city scale. It is so in Cornmarket Street and George Street as well as in High Street and St. Giles. But if the scale is the same in the commercial streets as it is in the more collegiate ones, the quality is not. Cornmarket Street has been described as one of the ugliest streets in England. That is an exaggeration which expresses a too innocent disappointment that it is not up to the standard of High Street. It is

not as ugly as all that. It has crudities enough, and it will have more if the architectural exuberance of commerce is not restrained: yet while the Clarendon survives, at least, it still manages to retain something of an air of rather battered distinction. Of all the central commercial streets it is George Street that deserves contempt—and if it does not get it that is probably because it is too architecturally dead and empty to be regarded as worthy of any notice at all.

That is the Oxford of the guide books, of the drawings and the photographs—the few acres that were once enclosed by city walls: and a few more acres beyond them: an area occupying about a tenth of the total area now covered by the city: the area, approximately, which was occupied by the city in 1750. In 1750 be it noted: not in 1850. For in that hundred years, when most English cities and towns were building extensive new quarters, Oxford stagnated. As a consequence, the fine domestic terraces, squares, and crescents of the Georgian and Regency periods which embellish the central areas of most old towns are almost entirely lacking here. A few short blocks of half a dozen houses in St. Clement's and in the Woodstock and Banbury Roads just beyond St. Giles; Paradise Square (now blighted and dilapidated beyond redemption) and a few houses in St. Ebbe's: these are all the domestic buildings that Oxford possesses of England's greatest period of urbane architecture. There are, besides, some scores of little streets of unconsidered workmen's cottages in St. Ebbe's and Jericho: streets of less character than one would have thought could possibly have been built even in the later decades of that age when practically all buildings seem to have achieved some character and grace. And there are Beaumont Street and St. John's Street, and the little Park Town group of crescents standing off the Banbury Road in surprisingly urbane isolation from the rest of the city—these latter still full of the spirit of the earlier period though they were built as late as the 1850's, a curious survival of classicism in a city where at that very time the full and final explosion of the Gothic Revival was being ignited by Ruskin's seven lamps. But, even with these, the extent of renaissance domestic buildings in Oxford is quite unusually small: and there is no doubt that the city is the poorer on account of it.

It can be argued that this noble central tenth of Oxford is the poorer for the nine-tenths around it. Certainly at as late a date as 1850, and even more up to 1800, the effect of this small and crowded city rising sheer on its patch of gravel above the surrounding water meadows, between hills that were clear of suburbs, must have lifted up the heart by its beauty. Now the suburbs threaten to submerge it. Suburbs and suburbs and suburbs. The suburbs of North Oxford, East Oxford, South Oxford, and West Oxford: suburbs which might, with one exception, be the suburbs of London, Bath, Wolverhampton, Bournemouth, Exeter, Sunderland, or any other town in the kingdom. The one exception is the inner parts of the northern suburbs; North Oxford proper. There, when the dons were released from celibacy and became prolific, nearly a hundred years ago, enormous houses in red and yellow brick, with point-arched windows and all the turrets and little towers that Gothic taste could demand, were built by the score. They are gaunt and grim and ungracious: but they are now mercifully hidden for most of the year behind a richness of blossom and leaf that almost makes the curling streets look like roads through a park. Though the straighter streets of less grim Edwardian houses beyond them are more shrubby than wooded, they, too, are thick with leaf and blossom. And North Oxford, as a consequence, has a distinctive North

Oxfordian character. But the rest of the suburbs have none. They are—just universal suburbs. Victorian suburbs of the bleakest kind in St. Clement's and Grandpont. Between-the-wars-suburbia *in extenso* in Marston, Headington, Cowley, Iffley, Littlemore, Kennington, Abingdon Road, Botley, North Hinksey, Wolvercote, and Cutteslowe. They have their little differences, of course. Botley Road may have more petrol-pumps to the mile than Headington Road. The privet hedges of Cutteslowe may on the average be 2 feet higher than those of Cowley. But none of this matters much. They are but parts of universal suburbia—suburbia of semi-and-garage (or space for a garage), of rough-cast and hipped roof, of bay window and lattice casement, of 'Kosicot' and 'Mon Repos'.

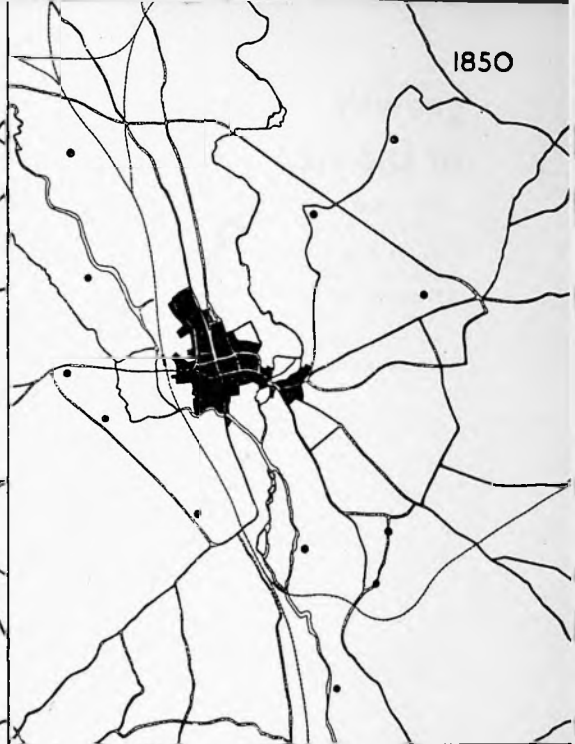
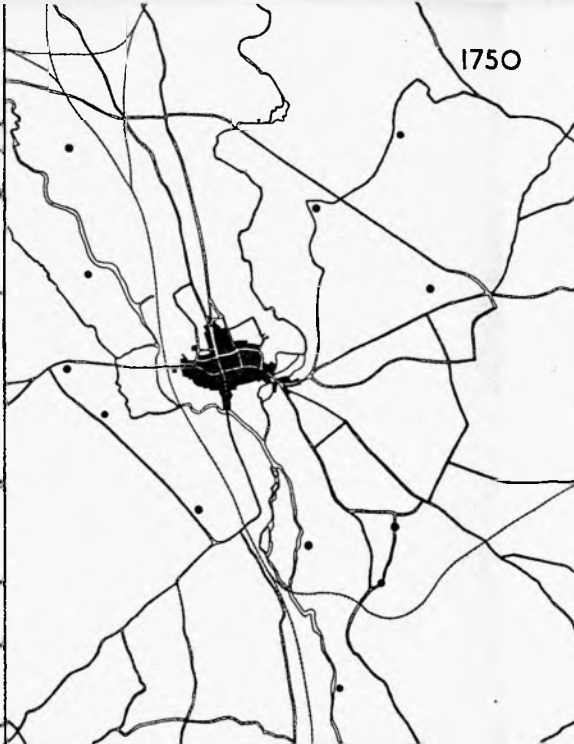
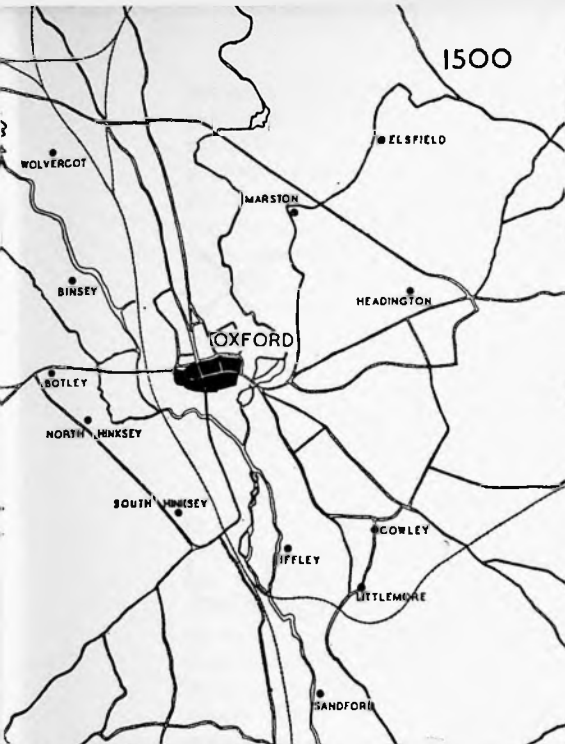
Since Park Town was built ninety years ago, at least twenty thousand buildings have been added to Oxford. The good buildings in the small old city were numbered by the hundred. The good buildings in the vast new quarters that have been added to it may perhaps total a dozen.

In the last twenty-five years alone, twelve thousand buildings have been put up along a hundred miles of new streets. The city has doubled its size. New schools, new shopping centres, new hospitals have been built as well as new houses. So have many great new university buildings. New playing-fields and parks have been established. All this has been done under official planning schemes that could be backed with legal force. Yet all the mistakes that could be made have been made. Nothing has been done well. Indeed nothing has been done well in Oxford for nearly a hundred years. And this in a city where for hundreds of years previously most things had been done especially well. It is a pitiful and ignoble end to a noble tradition.

Perhaps no one has been particularly to blame. Which means that everyone is to blame. Certainly the University is at least as responsible as the Corporation. The County Councils are as culpable as the University. Central government has its share in responsibility as well as local government. And it is a tragedy which has not been enacted in Oxford alone. It has happened simultaneously in all the towns and cities in the kingdom: and in the country-side too. We seem to have lost the ability to do thing well—this kind of thing at least. No longer able to create the good, we seem to let the bad just happen. That has been the tragedy of this century. But it is a pitiful thing that the bad and the mediocre should have happened in this degree and to this extent in this city of all cities.

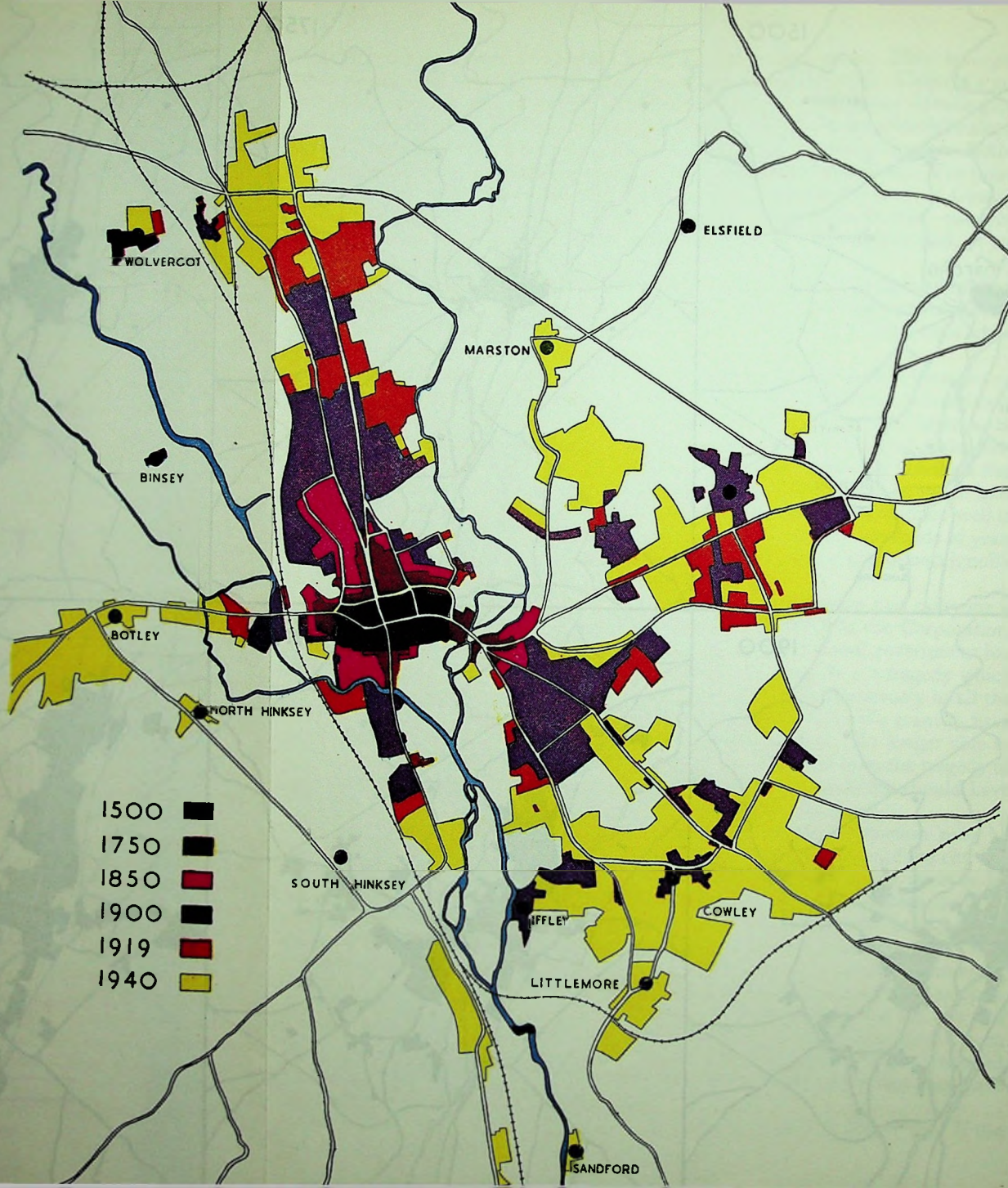
There are, however, two circumstances in which some satisfaction may be found among so much that is to be regretted. The historical centre of the city has not suffered as it might have done while all this mischief was going on outside. Though there are some buildings which one could wish had not been built, at least the virulently offensive and the aggressively incongruous have been avoided there. The character of the university city has on the whole been reasonably well conserved. It possibly would not have continued so if the war had not intervened, for plans which would have produced regrettable results were about to be put into operation when war began. But now, in 1946, the good parts of the old city still remain more or less undamaged; and the less good parts (e.g. Gloucester Green and St. Ebbe's) are still uncompromised, to be, one may hope, better redeveloped than they might have been but for the seven or eight years' grace that they have been granted.

The other satisfactory circumstance lies in a happy chance of geography. If the



growth of the city

The roads and railways shown on the diagrams are, of course, those of 1940. They are shown for purposes of identification.



last century's growth had occurred all round the old city, then indeed its architectural nobility would have been beleaguered almost beyond hope. The Thames and the Cherwell have saved it from that. The old university quarter, especially, has kept its freedom. It is still a peninsula jutting into open space. Northwards along the lovely arms of the placid Cherwell, the country, edged by University Parks, comes right down into Magdalen Grove. Eastwards the gap maintained by the delectable Angel Meadow is narrow but vital. And southwards from Christ Church Meadow, away out into the country beyond Kennington, the banks of the Thames are free even if they are neglected. Even on the west, beyond the commercial centre, freedom is compromised only by the thin ribbon of building along the Botley Road, and that can be cut without much difficulty. The only substantial wedge of building which is firmly and broadly attached to the old city is that along the North Oxford ridge: and that, fortunately, has a scale that is worthy of the city, and the fullness of its impact is softened by its park-like character.

Regrettable though the work of the last hundred years, and especially of the last thirty years, has mostly been, then, the architectural and physical character of the old Oxford remains almost unimpaired. Its setting has been heavily compromised, though by no means hopelessly so. And though the new outer Oxford has been most unworthily built, even that can to some extent be redeemed. Among a great deal to be regretted there is much to be thankful for. There is still an opportunity for this famous and once wholly lovely city to be saved. But it will only be saved if a resolute plan of salvation is acted upon. It is absence of plan as much as decline of ability which has wrought the recent havoc. The city to-day shows all the marks of timidity, hesitation, lack of high purpose and resolve. It reflects the indecision, the littleness of spirit of all concerned in its development, University and Corporation, scholars and citizens, architects and shopkeepers alike. To-day there comes a new opportunity. Probably the last opportunity. Great works of various kinds must now be undertaken. They will seal the fate of the city for good or ill. The chances of success are reasonable if the work is undertaken according to a preconceived plan, even if the plan itself falls short of perfection (as the plan hereafter described undoubtedly does). Without a plan to direct it the story of the next few decades' work will follow the story of these last. That much at least is certain. And the result will be fatal to the Oxford that has been loved and honoured among the cities of the world.

§ 2. SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

Cities are complicated organisms. Oxford, in proportion to its size, is one of the most complicated cities in the world. University city, cathedral city, county town, regional market centre—it is all these and much more besides. In planning for the future it is necessary to try to achieve (for the first time in six hundred years) something of a balance between these various functions; and to do that it is first necessary to analyse the social structure of the city as it is now and as it has been in the recent past.

(a) *Population*

In 1801 Oxford had a population of 12,000. A hundred years later it had 49,000. By 1911 it had reached 62,000; and, by 1921, more than 67,000. This rate of

growth was rapid enough, but after 1921 it became spectacular. In the decade between 1921 and 1931 there was an increase of nearly 20 per cent. (16 per cent. being due to immigration and 4 per cent. to natural increase). In the eight years between 1931 and 1939 the increase was even greater, the estimated total population in mid-1939 being 95,600, a growth of 18 per cent. above the 1931 figure of 80,000. In 1941, following an influx of Government Departments and evacuees from London, it was estimated that there were 108,000 people in the city; and later in the war, particularly during the time of the flying-bomb raids on London, the population reached an even higher figure. Now, in 1946, it has fallen somewhat; but it is estimated that it is still in the region of 100,000.¹

The distribution of the population during various periods of growth is shown by the diagrams facing pp. 50 and 51, and by Table 2.² The main growth between 1921 and 1931 was caused by, and was chiefly centred upon, the developing motor industry at Cowley. The population of the Cowley and Iffley district increased by 122 per cent. in this period, and that of Headington by 79 per cent.; and although the other wards of the city also showed increases they were in nothing like this degree. No comparable figures are available to show the exact distribution of population after the census of 1931, but a comparison of the electoral registers for 1931 and 1939, though these enumerated only persons over 21 years of age, gives some indication of what had happened in these eight years. All the older wards of the city (East, West, North, and South) showed substantial decreases of between 7 per cent. and 16 per cent., whereas Cowley and Iffley increased by 86 per cent., Headington by 59 per cent., and Summertown and Wolvercote by 41 per cent.

As to the constitution of the population, it is not, unfortunately, possible to give any precise figures, for no detailed analysis has been made since the 1931 census, and that is so out of date as to have the possibility of being misleading. Never-

¹ TABLE I
(a) OXFORD—POPULATION CHANGES 1921-39

	Population				Percentage increase or decrease		
	Census		Estimated				
	Mid 1921	Mid 1931	Mid 1939	Mid 1941*	1921-31	1931-9	1939-41
Oxford C. B.	67,290	80,539	95,600	108,000	+19·7	+18·0	+13·0
Oxford Admin. County	122,325	129,082	137,660	181,860	+5·5	+6·19	+3·2
Total	189,615	209,621	233,260	289,860	+10·6	+11·0	+24·5

* Civilian population only.

(b) POPULATION CHANGES BY IMMIGRATION—NATURAL INCREASE

	1921-31			1931-9		
	% Change	% Immigration	% Natural increase	% Change	% Immigration	% Natural increase
Oxford C. B.	+19·7	+15·7	+4·0	+18·0	+14·0	+4·0
Oxford Admin. County	+5·5	+1·5	+4·0	+6·9	+4·23	+1·96
Total	+10·6	+6·6	+4·0	+11·0	+8·0	+3·0

² See note opposite.

theless, one or two facts of 1931 are worth noting since they illustrate something of the position which is still likely to exist (though in a changed degree), and in doing so indicate problems which are likely to become pronounced in the near future. One of the most interesting facts at that time³ was the preponderance of men in the age groups between 15 and 34. In some degree this is not altogether unexpected in a university city where the male undergraduates numbered 4,473, or 7 per cent. of the total population over 14 years of age: but here in Oxford it had a special significance in that it reflects the nature of the main industry. The

² TABLE 2

(a) OXFORD C. B. POPULATION BY WARDS

	1931	Census 1921	Census 1931	% Increase or decrease
	Acreage	Population	Population	
Oxford C. B.	8,416	67,290	80,539	+19.7
<i>Wards*</i>				
East	623	15,251	15,642	+2.6
West	1,600	12,160	12,000	-1.3
North	783	10,847	11,182	+3.1
South	625	11,680	12,467	+6.8
Cowley and Iffley	1,619	†5,477	12,174	+112.3
Headington	1,766	†5,708	10,131	+77.5
Summertown and Wolvercote	1,400	†6,167	6,943	+12.6

* From 1931 census, adjusted for changes in boundary.

† Not separate Wards in 1921.

(b) REGISTER OF ELECTORS (21 and over)

<i>Wards</i>	1931	1939	% Difference
East	10,177	9,397	-7.6
West	7,760	6,482	-16.4
North	6,428	6,159	-4.2
South	7,566	6,633	-12.3
Cowley and Iffley	7,546	14,062	+86.3
Headington	6,396	10,193	+59.3
Summertown and Wolvercote	4,877	6,900	+41.3
Total	50,750	59,826	+17.9

³ TABLE 3

AGE AND SEX STRUCTURE OF POPULATION—OXFORD 1931

<i>Age Group (age last birthday)</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>	% of total population		<i>No. of males per 100 females</i>	
				<i>Oxford</i>	<i>England and Wales</i>	<i>Oxford</i>	<i>England and Wales</i>
All Ages	39,150	41,389	80,539	100.0	100.0	—	—
0-4	2,662	2,603	5,265	6.54	7.48	102.2	102.0
5-14	5,244	5,232	10,476	13.01	16.34	100.2	102.1
15-24	10,382	8,177	18,559	23.04	17.34	127.0	96.8
25-34	6,655	6,685	13,340	16.56	16.05	99.6	91.4
35-44	4,719	5,604	10,323	12.82	13.68	84.2	85.1
45-54	4,068	5,040	9,108	11.31	12.35	80.7	87.5
55-64	2,887	3,925	6,812	8.46	9.32	73.6	90.0
65 and over	2,533	4,123	6,656	8.26	7.42	61.4	75.3

average age of the workers in the motor industry before the war was 27: and, while the ratio of males to females between 15 and 34 years of age was 94.1 to 100 in England and Wales as a whole, in Oxford it was 113.3 to 100. It is known that, in 1939, 92 per cent. of the employees in the motor industry in Oxford were men (and this group employed 30 per cent. of the whole of the insured workers). It is also known that, after the age of 45, most men are unsuitable for the heavy work in this industry, and for the speed of its processes. From all of this it is clear that, unless new developments change the situation, the ageing of the general labour force which manned the motor industry in the 1920's and the 1930's will give rise to acute social problems in the near future.

Two further points of interest are worth noting. The first is that the preponderance of men in the age groups below 35 years of age was balanced, on the other side of the scale, by the preponderance of women above that age. The second point is the (at first sight) surprising one that the proportion of retired people in Oxford was just *under* that in the country as a whole (being 3 per cent. of the inhabitants who were 14 years of age and over, as against 3.1 per cent. throughout the country)—a fact which must, again, have been determined to a large extent by the special conditions in the motor industry.

(b) Living Place

In 1939 the total number of occupied dwellings in the city was approximately 24,000. In 1931 it had been 16,876.

The high proportion of new buildings in relation to the size of the city is reflected in the rating returns for 1938, which show that whereas, at that time, 64.6 per cent. of all dwellings in England and Wales were built before 1914, only 54.2 per cent. were of that age in Oxford. But although the building of houses between 1931 and 1939 was very rapid, it could by no means keep pace with the demand. The needs of immigrant workers competed with those who were badly housed in the slum and near-slum quarters of the city: and neither class of claimant was satisfied. The City Council, alone, was unable to meet more than a fraction of the demand; the two industrial concerns which were mainly responsible for the situation did not themselves directly undertake the provision of houses for their workers: and by far the greater part of the building between 1934 and 1939 (some 84 per cent.) was undertaken by local builders and by speculating firms which came in from other parts of the country. This being so, it was towards the new housing of the new population, rather than the rehousing of the old slum-housed population that the new work was chiefly directed—as the facts of house-ownership clearly show; for while in 1938, over the country as a whole, some 34.9 per cent. of all houses were owned by their occupiers, in Oxford the proportion was as high as 43.5 per cent., the greater part of these (25 per cent. of all houses in the city) being houses built since 1920. Yet in spite of all this it was impossible for many workers in the new industries to find living space within the city. To-day, in mid-1946, the Corporation's waiting list contains the names of nearly 5,000¹ applicants for houses, excluding those occupying separate dwellings in the slums and blighted districts.

Although the urgency of meeting the housing needs of immigrant workers has

¹ A more correct estimate of the true need, allowing for the likelihood that some people have their names on other town lists, is probably about 4,000.

led to a concentration on the building of new houses, the necessity of clearing away the slum areas and of rehousing their populations has not been wholly neglected. In 1939 the greater part of the St. Ebbe's district, lying immediately to the west of Christ Church, was about to be declared a slum-clearance area, and had it not been for the war its 750 slum houses would no doubt by now have been demolished and new buildings erected in their place. As it is, although no actual steps towards clearance have yet been taken, demolition and rebuilding will be begun as soon as labour and materials are available (though whether any extensive rehousing should now take place here is a matter which will need reconsideration in the light of the replanning of the city as a whole). But St. Ebbe's is only one of the city's several extensive areas of slums or of property so blighted and outworn as to be unsuitable for living in. In the district variously known as Jericho or St. Barnabas there are over 1,000 slum or near-slum houses that need to be cleared away. There are between 1,500 and 2,000 in the dreary and blighted streets beyond the Plain in St. Clement's. And besides all these, there are many hundreds of others, including several hundred in the Osney district, which will need to be pulled down when the more urgent work has been done. And, again, there is much else that needs doing to provide satisfactory housing: as, for example, in the *genuine* adaptation of the scores of big houses in North Oxford which have been sub-rented as flats but not adapted to provide them properly—though this, too, cannot be undertaken for some time yet.

The sum of all this is that some six thousand¹ new dwellings are required in Oxford to meet the present and early needs of people at present living or working in the city, *without any consideration whatever of the possibility of future growth*. On a slightly longer view, more than eight thousand² new dwellings are required to make this city of 100,000 inhabitants a reasonably satisfactory living place. At least half of these dwellings are of a kind which it is unlikely that the private builder will ever consider making an effort to supply. At present, in the matter of housing accommodation alone, Oxford is a far from satisfactory living place for something like one-third of its people.

(c) *Workplace*

It is also a far from satisfactory workplace in one or two important respects. In the absence of a recent census it is usual nowadays to analyse the character of a town as a workplace by reference to the statistics relating to the population insured against unemployment: but this is never a very precise method, for professional and personal services are excluded from that insurance: and it is especially unreliable in a university city and county capital such as Oxford. To gain some indication of the structure of the city over the whole field of its work it is necessary to fall back on the latest census, out of date though it may be. That census shows that, in 1931, some 7·7 per cent. of the occupied population of Oxford was classified under the heading of 'professions', as against 4 per cent. for England and Wales generally; while 22·7 per cent. was classified under 'personal services' as against 12·7 per cent. in the two countries as a whole—the high percentage in both of these types being accounted for in the main by the presence of the University. The census further shows that at that time only 26 per cent. of the occupied

¹ Waiting list, 4,000, + St. Ebbe's, 750, + Jericho, 1,000 = approx. 6,000.

² St. Clement's, 1,500–2,000 + others = approx. 2,000 additional.

population was engaged in the manufacturing industries, while about 68 per cent. was engaged in the professions and service trades. These proportions have no doubt changed a good deal since 1931; but even so it is certain that to-day, as then, the degree of domination by what is ordinarily termed 'industry' is less great than is suggested by the bare statistics relating to the occupationally insured population.

With the reservation suggested by these figures in mind, an examination of the occupations of its insured workers gives a clear picture of Oxford as a workplace in the narrower sense.¹ The important thing in assessing a city's predominant functions as a workplace is not so much the absolute number of people who are employed in a particular activity as the comparative number considered in relation to the general comparative average over the whole country. Regarded in this way the available statistics are illuminating. In 1939 the manufacturing industries still employed less than half of the total insured workers. They also employed less than the service occupations did. Within the service occupations, the facts with regard to two occupation-groups are especially interesting and significant. In spite of a rapid rise between 1929 and 1939, and in spite of being 19 per cent. higher than the national average, the number of workers engaged in the distributive trades in Oxford is much lower than that in most of the county towns of regions that are primarily agricultural. (In Exeter, for example, the proportion of workers in these trades is more than 100 per cent. higher than the national average; in Salisbury it is 73 per cent. higher: and these are not specially selected contrasts but merely typical examples.) It does not necessarily follow from this that Oxford's function as a shopping centre is less important than is usual in a county town. What is clear is that this function is less important than is usual in relation to

¹ TABLE 4

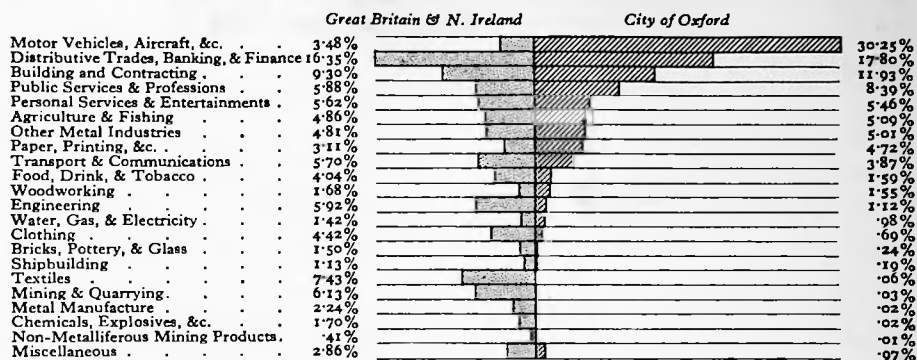
INSURED POPULATION IN MAIN INDUSTRIES, OXFORD 1929 AND 1939
(Based on Ministry of Labour statistics of Exchange of Employment Books, 1929 and 1939)

Industry	1929	1939			
	Insured population	Insured population	% of total	% Women in group	Location coefficient Gt. Britain and N. Ireland = 100
<i>Agriculture</i>	*	1,973	5.1†	1.9	109
<i>Manufacturing Industries</i>	11,035	17,640	45.5	13.3	105
Vehicles and Aircraft	6,075	11,718	30.31	8.2	869
Metal Industries	826	1,941	5.0	11.1	98
Printing and Publishing	1,552	1,694	4.4	32.1	220
<i>Service Occupations</i>					
Distributive Trade	4,916	6,717	17.3	40.4	119
Building and Contracting	3,094	4,620	11.9	1.1	128
Hotels, Laundries, &c.	1,115	1,842	4.8	67.1	103
Government Service (Local and National)	989	1,802	4.7	25.0	106
Total insured population	23,104	38,732	—	20.8	—

* Agriculture not insurable in 1929.

† Includes books exchanged at local agencies outside the Employment Exchange area.

COMPARATIVE EMPLOYMENT FIGURES FOR OXFORD AND GREAT [BRITAIN, 1939



the other functions of the city. And the relative unimportance of the city's function as a tourist centre is shown in the same way; for in 1939 the total percentage of workers in the groups concerned with this activity was only 3 per cent. higher than the national average.

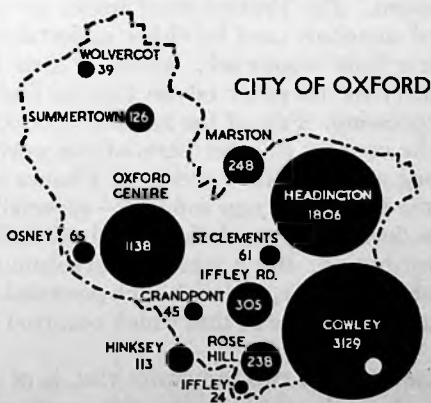
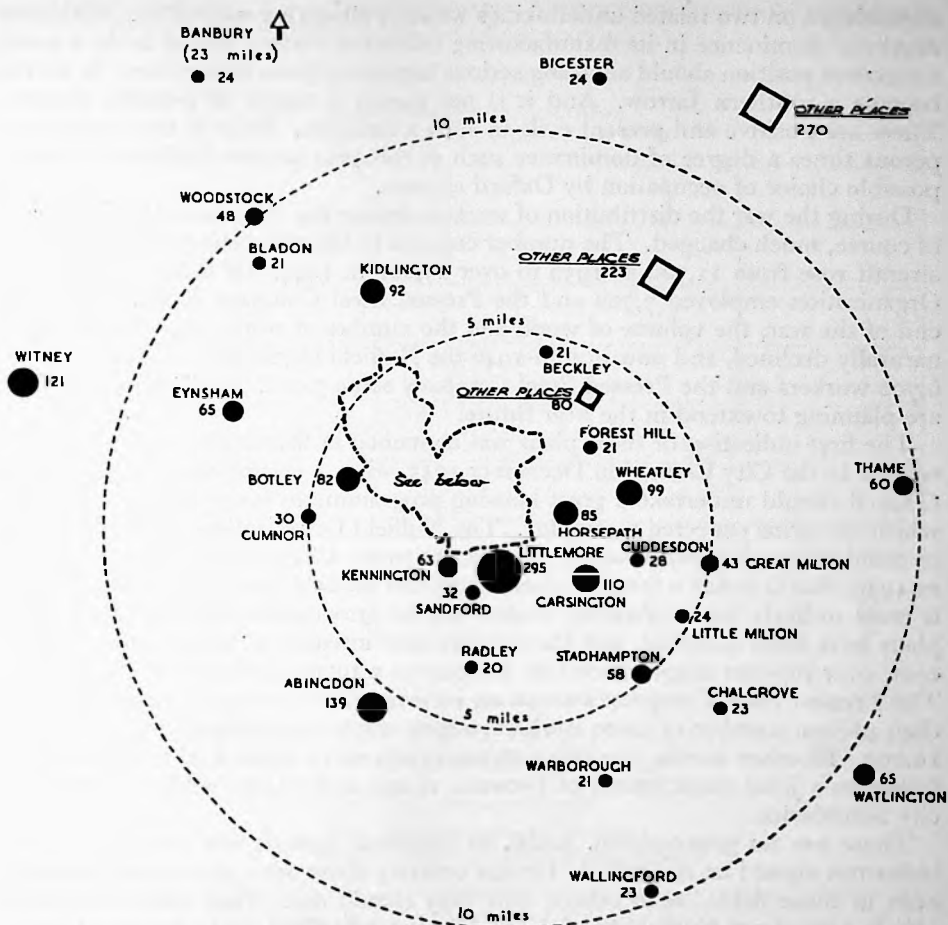
Among the manufacturing industries, the industry which had long held first place, namely printing and publishing, had by 1939 fallen to a minor third place, and the whole field of these industries was dominated by the gigantically grown motor industry.¹ Of the 17,600 workers engaged in manufacturing industries at this time, over 11,700 were engaged in the manufacture of motor vehicles and aircraft. The joint employment by the Nuffield Organization and the Pressed Steel Company represented 30 per cent. of the total insured workers in the city, 66.5 per cent. of all those employed in the manufacturing industries, and 97.8 per cent. of those engaged in the production of motor vehicles and aircraft. These figures are not merely illuminating: they are alarming. They disclose a degree of

¹ TABLE 5
LIST OF MAIN ENTERPRISES 1939

<i>Firm</i>	<i>Industry</i>	<i>Approx. number employed</i>
<i>Oxford</i>		
Pressed Steel . . .	Steel Pressings	5,250
Morris Motors . . .	Motor-car Assembly, &c.	4,670
Morris Motor Radiators	Radiators	1,290
Oxford University Press	Letterpress, Printing	840
Lucy & Co. Ltd. . . .	Engineering	500
John Allen & Sons . . .	Engineering	270
Oxford Gas Co. . . .	Gas	160
Mowbray	Printing, Church Furnishing	150
Minty	Cabinets, &c.	150
Morris Industries Export	(Tanks)	130
<i>Oxford Mail & Times</i> . . .	Letterpress, Printing	130
Morris Motors	Motor Vehicle Repairs	114
Hunt & Broadhurst . . .	Letterpress, Printing	110
Alden Press Ltd. . . .	Letterpress, Printing	93
Cooper	Marmalade	93
Elliston & Cavell . . .	Bedding and Cabinets	60

Below, 1938; opposite, 1946





dependence on two related undertakings which is altogether unhealthy. With this degree of dominance in its manufacturing industries Oxford would be in a most dangerous position should anything serious happen to these enterprises. It would become a southern Jarrow. And it is not merely a matter of possible danger. There are positive and present evils in such a situation. Even in the most prosperous times a degree of dominance such as this puts serious limitations on the possible choice of occupation by Oxford citizens.

During the war the distribution of workers among the various occupations was, of course, much changed. The number engaged in the production of vehicles and aircraft rose from 11,700 in 1939 to over 17,000 in 1944. Of these the Nuffield Organization employed 7,700 and the Pressed Steel Company 9,600. With the end of the war, the volume of work, and the number of workers in the industry, naturally declined, and now in mid-1946 the Nuffield Organization employs some 6,700 workers and the Pressed Steel Company some 7,000. But both enterprises are planning to extend in the near future.

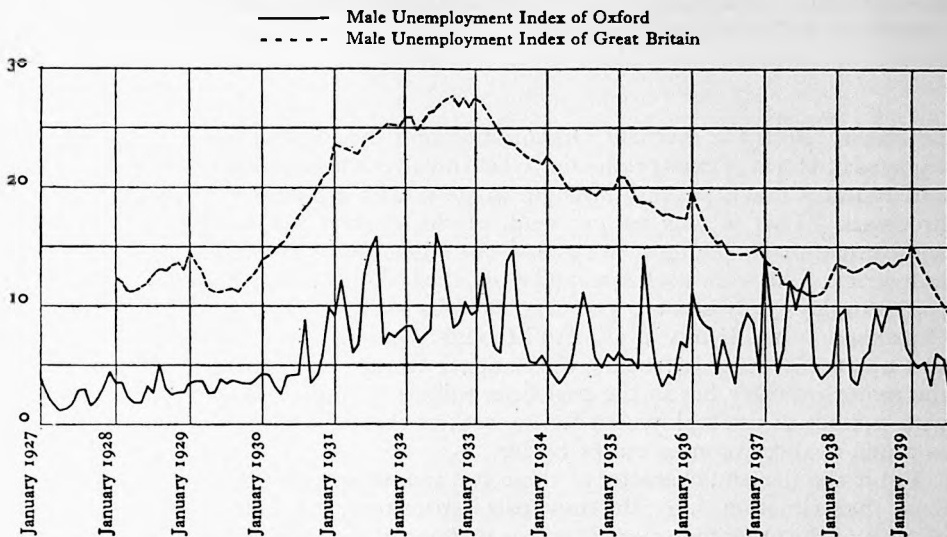
The first indication of these plans was contained in the much-discussed letters written to the City Council in December 1945, when a request was made that the Council should undertake a great housing programme to house the new workers which the firms expected to employ. The Nuffield Organization originally had it in mind to employ permanently some 2,000 more workers than were employed in 1939, that is to say a total of some 8,200; but since it has become clear that it is most unlikely that additional houses will be provided for this number, these plans have been modified, and the increase now intended is one of about 10 per cent. over pre-war employment: an increase to a total of rather less than 7,000. The Pressed Steel Company intends an increase of between 2,000 and 3,000 on their present number of 7,000 workers: a total employment of between 9,000 and 10,000. In other words, the two companies intend to expand in the immediate future to a joint employment of between 16,000 and 17,000 within the Oxford city boundaries.

There are no geographical, social, or economic reasons why these two great industries should be in Oxford. On the contrary there are a great many reasons, even in these fields, as in others, why they should not. They came to Oxford only because Lord Nuffield lived there. The great Nuffield works are an extension of a shed in a back garden. The Pressed Steel works are an extension again of those. None of the raw materials used by either undertaking is drawn from the Oxford locality, except a little woodwork. Much of their labour came in from other parts of the country for no other reason than to find work of any sort in a period of national depression. Few of the finished products remain in Oxford, and many go outside the country to other parts of the world. The development of these works in Oxford was the purest accident. Chance has frequently played some part in deciding the location of new industry—especially since the invention of the machines to whose development and widespread use the Nuffield Organization has made so great a contribution. But it is rarely that so enormous an industry has developed in so unsuitable a locality, and with such powerful effect on an historical city, as a result of so simple a chance as that which occurred in Oxford some forty years ago.

It is not only the *size* of these two industries that is of grave concern to the city. The conditions of work within them also produce peculiarly difficult

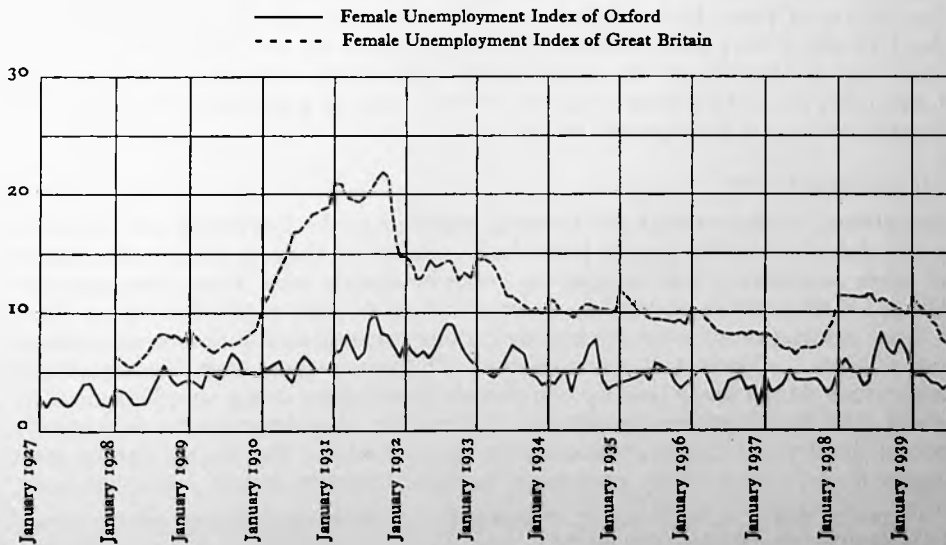
GRAPH TO SHOW THE MALE UNEMPLOYMENT INDEX OF OXFORD COMPARED WITH THAT OF GREAT BRITAIN

JANUARY 1927 TO AUGUST 1939



GRAPH TO SHOW THE FEMALE UNEMPLOYMENT INDEX OF OXFORD COMPARED WITH THAT OF GREAT BRITAIN

JANUARY 1927 TO AUGUST 1939



in spite of Oxford's intimacy of character, in spite of the

domestic airs which mingle with the graces of learning among the university buildings, the main streets are the main streets of a true city, not those of a town, even a large town. The scale is city scale, as this view of High Street at Carfax shows. But good architectural scale is not necessarily good traffic scale: and it is often difficult nowadays to see the buildings for the buses.

problems. Both the Nuffield Organization and the Pressed Steel Company are engaged in a form of mass production which involves the handling of heavy materials and requires much physical strength in those who are employed in the various processes. That is why 92 per cent. of the workers are, and must be, men, and comparatively young men at that—for a man becomes too old at 45 in these industries. The work itself is not what is called 'skilled'. The Pressed Steel Company employs only some 8 per cent. of fully skilled workers, and the Nuffield Organization hardly any at all. And though wages in both enterprises are good, and unemployment well below the national average as a whole, employment in the motor industry has in the past been subject to marked seasonal fluctuations, with periods of unemployment for its workers that sometimes have amounted to as much as three months out of twelve.

But if the size and character of these two industries give rise to difficult problems, their situation is, for the most part, satisfactory. So, indeed, is the situation of most of the other factories. It is true that one of the subsidiaries of the Nuffield Organization, the Radiator Works at North Oxford, is the only industry in the city which is really badly sited: so large a factory (it employs about 2,000 workers) should never have been established in that wholly residential area remote from other factories. And the Gas Works not only blights a great area round about it, as gas works do in every town in the country: it also ruins the stretch of river west of Folly Bridge and the noble views of the city from the railway and from the heights of Boars Hill and Cumnor. But as for the main Nuffield and Pressed Steel Works, if they *had* to come to Oxford, no better site could have been chosen than that at Cowley on the south-eastern edge of the city, far away from the University, in a place where they do as little harm to physical amenities as any large factories can be expected to do.

(d) *Cultural Centre*

Sometimes, in moments of self-defence, members of the University are driven to argue that theirs is the biggest individual 'industry' in Oxford, even in the matter of mere numbers. It is not easy to compute exactly what these numbers are. Oxford University is unusual in its organization as well as in other ways. It is a loose association of some twenty-eight quite separate and autonomous colleges rather than a closely knit confederation. In consequence, even the university authorities do not know (and no one else can know) some of the simple basic facts about their world-famous institution. The number of undergraduates is generally round about 5,000: that is the one known numerical fact.¹ But no one knows, even approximately, how many professors, readers, lecturers, tutors, administrators,

¹ 4,600 in 1938-9; 6,280 in 1946-7, the figures in this year being, of course, much increased by undergraduates returned from the war.



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Cornmarket Street has been much abused, both by new

buildings that have been erected in it, and in descriptions that have been written of it. But while the Clarendon Hotel (right foreground) remains undestroyed by Messrs. Woolworth, and Tom Tower closes the view towards Carfax, it still retains an air of somewhat battered distinction. All the same, a street is carriageway and pavements as well as buildings: and carriageway and pavements mean vehicles and people. Cornmarket Street is both main traffic street and main shopping street: and it is too narrow to be either, let alone both. Conditions in it have become intolerable. It cannot be widened; if it is to be improved it must be by-passed.

and others are engaged in the education of these undergraduates—the most that anyone can say is that at a guess it is likely to be somewhere between 500 and 1,000. No one knows, even, for a certainty, how many college servants there are, though this can be estimated rather more closely: there are probably about 2,000. Nor how many landladies provide lodgings for undergraduates living out of college—though again it can be roughly estimated that there must be between 500 and 1,000 of these, since one-third of the undergraduates are generally out-housed. Thus, since there are 5,000 people engaged in getting a university education, between 500 and 1,000 engaged in giving it, and somewhere about 3,000 directly occupied in ministering to those engaged in this getting and giving, there is a total of at least 8,500 workers, apprentices, and attendants employed in the pursuit of learning, or in assisting in it; and the University, even in the mere number of workers employed, may properly claim to be by far the largest single industrious organization in the city.¹

Its occupancy of space and buildings is, of course, far greater than that of any other institution or organization. A great mass of buildings, made up of the (mostly) beautiful old, the (mostly) idiosyncratic Victorian, and the (mostly) anaemic modern, crowds between Cornmarket Street, Magdalen Bridge, Broad Walk, and the University Parks, with various others outcropping beyond, especially in the nearer parts of North Oxford. In the historical centre of the city the old war between town and gown is now chiefly expressed in the scramble for building sites which is inevitable when the redevelopment of a highly congested district proceeds without any attempt at a plan which will satisfy, or at least assess between, the needs of the various claimants. The University's building activities during the last few decades do not conform to any kind of plan which anyone outside the University can recognize; nor probably anyone within it—though that is a criticism which equally applies to most building activities in the city.

In spite of much recent building, the University as a corporate body, and the colleges as individual institutions, are hard pressed for building room. Many kinds of buildings for teaching and research are urgently needed: and the virtual collapse of the system of licensed lodgings for undergraduates who cannot be housed in the colleges will make the provision of new living quarters essential in the near future. And besides the restrictions and difficulties created by the lack of a number of adequate buildings, and the competition for sites for them—a negative limitation—a positive menace to the University's successful functioning has arisen in the disturbance caused by the continuously growing traffic congestion in the city

¹ Not even the massive two-volume *Survey of the Social Services in the Oxford District* contains any kind of a survey of the University, so the inadequacy of the notes here in this much briefer survey may perhaps be excused.



existing uses in the district: 1946

centre. It is said that some of the old buildings are in danger of actual collapse from the weight and vibration of the thousands of vehicles which daily thunder against their foundations. Whether that is the case or not, it is certain that the Niagara of traffic which cuts the main University quarter in two (though once High Street was a unifying rather than a severing agent) has utterly broken the calm and quietness which is an essential quality in a place devoted to the pursuit of learning.

The University's deficiency in many necessary buildings is shared by the city itself. The setting up of a distinction between university and city in this, as in other matters, is, indeed, both artificial and false, for the University is, or should be, a part of the city: and, in cultural buildings especially (though in shops and buses and much else besides), the requirements of citizens and scholars have much in common. In addition, the University draws within its orbit many people who are not formally associated with it; and thus the practice and enjoyment of the arts should be easier in Oxford than elsewhere. It is easier than in most cities. But it is still not easy enough—mostly for lack of satisfactory buildings. It is true that the city has two theatres, where intelligent plays may sometimes be seen. But it has no adequate concert rooms, public lecture halls, or assembly halls. And while the University throws the galleries of the Ashmolean open to the public, the city does not make the contribution which it might in the provision of galleries of its own. And as to the cinema—well, it is true that there are three large cinemas in the city centre and one at Cowley, but they are all owned by one circuit; and, whether lack of competition is the cause or not, the quality of the films exhibited in this 'centre of culture' is for the most part as deplorable as it is in any mining village.

(e) Shopping Centre

The position of the distributive trades as a minor second to a single branch of the manufacturing industries (they employ not much more than half of the insured workers who are employed in the motor industry alone) seems to support the general opinion in the city, and the impression which all visitors must gain, that Oxford's shopping facilities are inadequate for a city of its size and kind. These observations, unsupported by statistics, suggest that it would be a pretty safe gamble to bet that Oxford has less than half the number of shops which most county towns have. But a bet of this kind would be badly lost, for a very thorough

TABLE 6
NUMBERS AND TYPES OF SHOPS, OXFORD 1946

Type	Total number	West of Magdalen Bridge	East of Magdalen Bridge
Supplying food	631	333	298
„ clothing	246	163	83
„ household goods . . .	265	161	104
„ miscellaneous goods .	367	230	137
„ services	439	272	167
Total	1,948	1,159	789

Oxford Castle, though it is rarely seen, half-hidden as it

is by prison and workshop buildings, is one of the great historical monuments of the city. If its setting were improved, as this plan suggests it should be, its silver-grey tower, standing in an open space at the edge of one of the arms of the river, would be one of the city's most impressive sights. And that would be good for balance as well as beauty, for the city's own historical buildings tend to be overshadowed by the university's.

survey¹ which the City Engineer has had made shows that, as regards *numbers* of shops at least, the city as a whole is probably somewhere about the national average. There are 1,948 shops within the city boundaries,² which means that there is one shop to every fifty-one inhabitants. This compares not unfavourably with the position in other towns where similar particulars are known approximately.³

The survey shows another somewhat surprising fact—that over 40 per cent. of all the shops in the city lie east of Magdalen Bridge. It has frequently been suggested that much of the congestion in the city centre, and particularly in Cornmarket Street, results from the inadequate number of shops in the newer parts of the city, and especially in the eastern parts. And the opinion is firmly held, by those for whom the whole cure of Oxford's problems lies in the creation of 'twin' Cherwell-divided cities, that all that is necessary to overcome most of the city's difficulties is to build more shops in the easterly 'twin'. The facts disprove this contention. Indeed it is the *insufficient* number of shops, rather than the contrary, which causes congestion in the centre. Central-city shops are nearly always of a special kind and size, or sell goods of a different quality and in a wider range than suburban shops. In Oxford there are too few of these shops to meet the city's and the region's demands. The presence of the great college buildings on the east, the special topographical conditions on the west, and the absence of satisfactory streets on the south, have confined the centre and restricted its natural

¹ For full details of this survey see Appendix 3, p. 216.

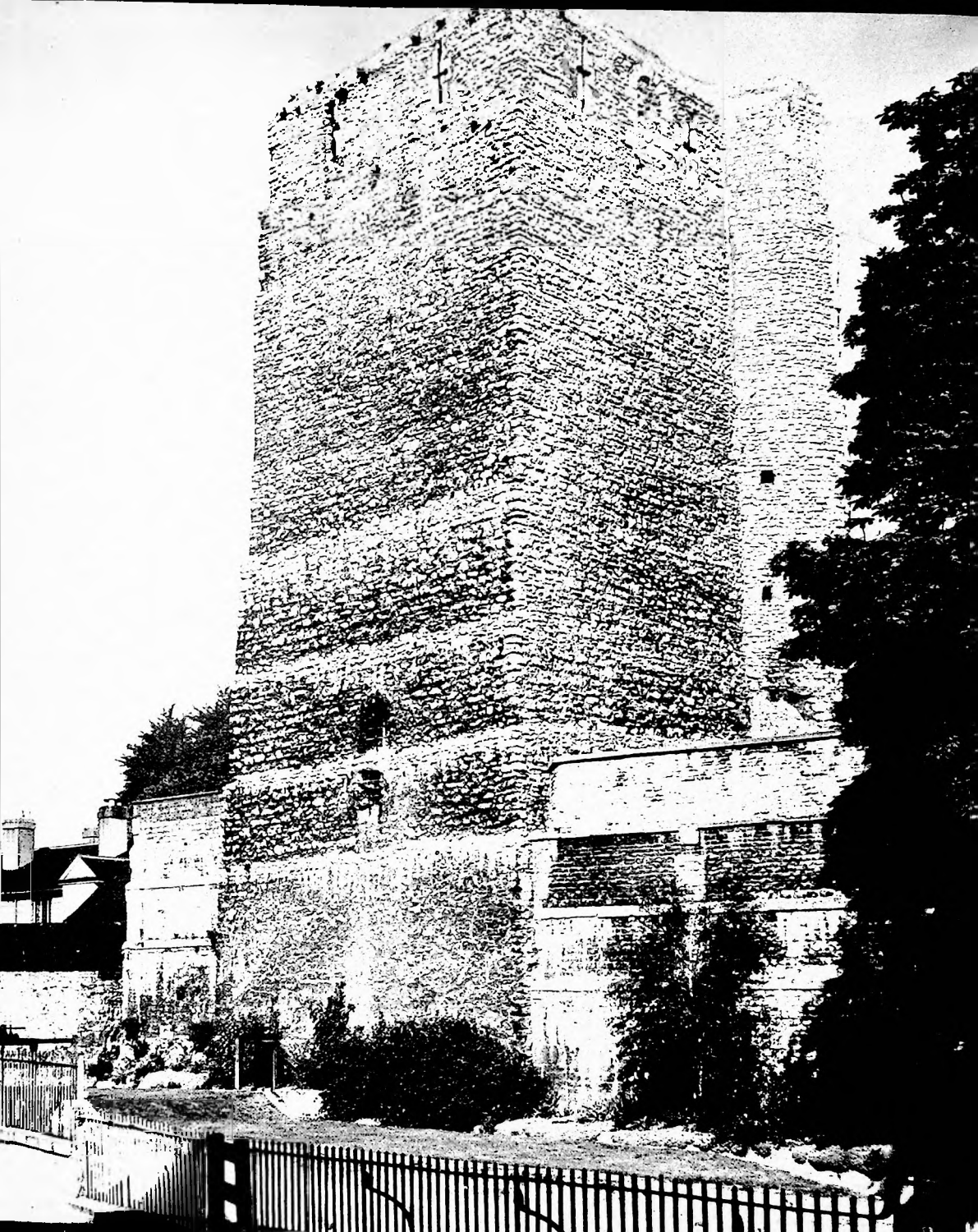
² See Table 6 on previous page.

³ TABLE 7

NUMBERS OF INHABITANTS PER SHOP IN CERTAIN TOWNS

(Note: The towns in the list are not included here by way of special selection, but merely because approximate figures for them happen to be available)

<i>Town</i>	<i>No. of inhabitants per shop</i>
Chorley . . .	32·5
King's Lynn . . .	38
Durham . . .	41
Weymouth . . .	42
Manchester . . .	44
Exeter . . .	49
<i>Oxford</i> . . .	51
Birmingham . . .	52
Glasgow . . .	60
Jarrow . . .	61
Slough . . .	72
Middlesbrough . . .	85·5





St. Giles, like High Street, has much nobility. But it has a quite different character. Wide-paved and tree-shaded, with a church at each end, it suggests the main street of the capital of the Cotswolds. The older domestic parts of Oxford have indeed a Cotswold character, though not in the least a rustic character. They, as much as the collegiate quarters, are urbane as well as intimate.

growth. The present shopping centre is no bigger than that which a hundred years ago served a city little more than a tenth the size of Oxford to-day.

(f) *Tourist Centre*

Much-starred in Baedeker: one of the city names known to the far ends of the earth; an unmatched concentration of lovely buildings set between placid rivers in a pleasant country-side; a place teeming with famous associations—with all these advantages Oxford should surely be one of the great tourist centres of the world. It is nothing of the kind. It does, of course, attract many visitors. But it treats them so discouragingly in the matter of mere comfort that few who come can enthusiastically recommend others to follow their example. It has most of the qualities which the tourist seeks, but little of the equipment to enable him to enjoy them.

This is especially so as regards accommodation, as the table of hotel provision in nine towns comparable to Oxford unmistakably shows.

TABLE 8*

HOTELS STARRED BY THE AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION 1939

<i>Town</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>No. of Hotel bedrooms</i>	<i>Hotel bedrooms per 1,000 pop.</i>
Stratford-on-Avon . . .	11,500	427	37·1
Leamington . . .	33,000	366	11·0
Hereford . . .	29,000	271	9·5
Bath . . .	79,000	710	9·0
Salisbury . . .	34,000	227	6·7
Canterbury . . .	27,000	161	6·0
Cambridge . . .	79,000	355	4·5
Exeter . . .	70,000	271	4·0
Gloucester . . .	62,000	209	3·4
Oxford . . .	100,000	314	3·1

* Some of these figures are taken from *The Oxford Magazine*, 22 Feb. 1945.

The position of Oxford in this list is bad enough, in all conscience; but when from the 314 bedrooms in starred-hotels which it had in 1939 are deducted the 83 rooms which were lost when Messrs. Woolworths bought the Clarendon to demolish it and build one of their stores, then the remaining total of 231 bedrooms, representing only 2·3 per 1,000 inhabitants of the city, shows a level of inadequacy which is quite shocking.

It is true that the comparison of hotel accommodation with the total number of a town's inhabitants is not entirely fair. It is a town's quality, not its size, that attracts tourists. But in quality alone the centre of Oxford far outmatches any town on this list—and yet Bath, for example, had well over twice as many hotel bedrooms in 1939. There is clearly a grave shortage of first-class hotel accommodation in the city. And not for tourists only. People coming here on

business have little or no chance of finding a room in a good hotel unless they have booked it weeks, or even months, ahead—which, of course, in 1946 is true also of other towns, though not for the same reason; for here in Oxford none of the hotels has been taken out of commission for use by a government department as hotels have been elsewhere.

This shortage of hotel accommodation is, of course, by no means the only reason for the city's lack of real success as a tourist centre. Even the fine things that the city has to show are inadequately shown. The colleges may almost be described as 'wasting assets' in out-of-term periods. Their quads and grounds are open to the public for only a couple of hours in an afternoon, or at most for three¹—which makes it difficult for the visitor to see more than a few of them in a short stay. While no one in his senses would suggest any interference with the colleges' function as places of learning, or any kind of special provision in them for mere sight-seeing, there seems to be no good reason why their grounds should not be open for much longer periods during vacations. But far more important than this is the city's deficiency in many desirable amenities. The lack of good concert rooms, assembly halls, galleries, and other amenities of that kind has already been pointed out. The squalid condition of the riverside has also been mentioned (and will be described at some length later: see p. 182). The bathing-places are grim. The restaurants are squalid. All these deficiencies need to be made good for the benefit of Oxford people themselves. But in serving Oxford people in these matters, Oxford would do much more: it would also serve the tourists whom it now fails to attract.

¹ In contrast to those at Cambridge which are open all day.

2

A BASIS FOR PLANNING

Oxford to-day is a city in confusion: a city whose apparent destiny, a destiny which had been followed over a period of seven hundred years, has been thwarted—thwarted largely by a bicycle in a backyard. A world centre of learning, a regional centre of commerce, it has now become a minor industrial city as well. One of the noblest collections of buildings in the world has been surrounded by a sea of architectural triviality. Streets where learning lingered now rage with a turmoil of traffic. It is a city in which no one of its several sharply defined sections of inhabitants finds whole satisfaction, for their needs and desires war against each other. It is a city where even the visitor is harassed by the confusion—as well as by the difficulties of finding a place to lay his head.

Oxford has always been a city divided against itself. To-day it is doubly divided; for to the old struggle between town and gown (though fortunately that has much diminished of recent years) there is now added the struggle between gown and dungaree.

It is as useless to regret what has happened as it is to try to assess the blame for it. Oxford has changed. It has taken on new activities. It has grown from a medium-small to a medium-large city. That has to be accepted. The developments of the last forty years cannot be wiped out merely by wishing they had never happened. Nevertheless some of the trends which brought about these developments *can* be redirected or limited; much of the confusion that has arisen *can* be resolved; and many of the city's deficiencies *can* be made good. The present state of affairs has come about because of the lack of a commonly accepted decision as to what kind of a city Oxford should be. Perhaps there was never a sufficient opportunity to arrive at a decision. Looking back now, and thinking of forty years as part of a history of a thousand years, the changes that have taken place seem to have come about rapidly. But within the period itself they seemed to be slow and gradual. And during the time of expansion there was never any period of pause that afforded an opportunity to take stock of the position. Now, however, the war, and these months following it, have given the opportunity. If a decision is now taken, the future of Oxford may be determined by considerations of public good instead of being allowed to shape itself in mere drift. The next few years will be the most critical in the city's long history. If a clear decision is now made as to what kind of city Oxford should be, then, with the approval and help of the government, Oxford can be made into that kind of city.

What kind of city should Oxford become? That question has to be answered in the light of Oxford's place in the national economy, and not merely out of a consideration of the internal needs of the city in itself alone, or out of the desires

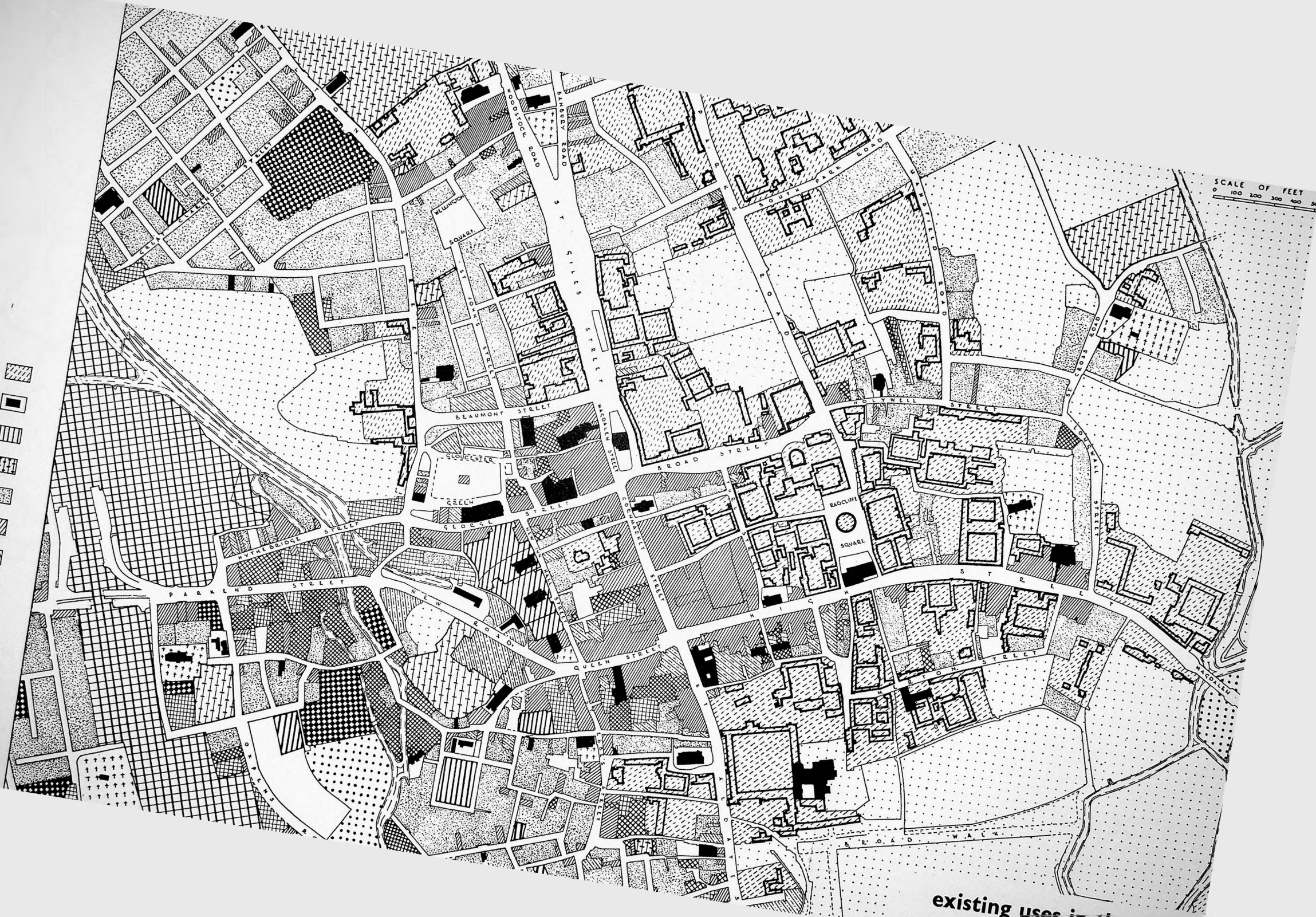
of the majority of its inhabitants. Indeed the range of interest is far wider. Oxford belongs to the world, as well as to England and the hundred thousand people who live about the junction of the Thames and the Cherwell. There is only one Oxford.

But there are tens of thousands of Cowleys. There are hundreds in England alone. That is the measure of it. Oxford's prime function in England and in the world, a function which could not wholly and satisfactorily be filled by any present competitor, or by any likely successor, is as a university city—and a university city of a very special kind. Its function in its region is as a shopping, cultural, and entertainment centre. Those functions are its *raisons d'être*. There is no reason whatever, in the international, national, or regional economies, for Oxford to change from these prime functions. There are indeed very powerful reasons why it should not. The only need for industrial undertakings here is to provide, for Oxford's inhabitants, a more satisfactory balance of employment than the requirements of the city, of the University, and of the surrounding region can supply alone.

Oxford was by no means a well-balanced city before the manufacture of cars began. It was too dependent on the University to be socially healthy. There was not sufficient choice of forms of work to satisfy the needs of the city's population. The coming of new industry, if it had been of the right kind and of the right size, would have resulted in nothing but good. There was no harm in the city's growing bigger than it was thirty or forty years ago. With a population of something like 70,000 or 80,000, and with a well-balanced number of industries, it would have been a far better city than that which, in the past, was wholly dominated by the University. Unfortunately the industry which came was both of the wrong size and of the wrong kind: and the city that has resulted from its coming, and that threatens to result from its further expansion, is altogether too big.

The city is too big for several reasons. It is too big for the geographical conditions of the site which it occupies. Carfax is the central point of a cross formed by narrow ridges of low elevation that rise above the floodlands adjoining the Thames and the Cherwell. The narrowness of these ridges has produced an attenuated cruciform city westwards of Magdalen Bridge. Only beyond the eastern side of the bridge does the character of the land permit the more lump-like roughly circular form which is ordinarily the most serviceable shape for a city; and, the more the city grows in this direction, the more distant the newer parts are from the traditional city centre. A similar 'remoteness' characterizes the suburban knob on the Cumnor and Hinksey Hills at the end of the western arm of the cross of ridges. Even in the present city of 100,000 inhabitants the distances between extremities are unduly great, for there are six miles between the northern suburbs and the southern, and nearly the same distance between the eastern and western. Moreover, the floodlands all along the many arms of the rivers limit provision of communications between the various parts of the ridge-top quarters themselves and between these quarters and the eastern bulk. It is the complete lack of such cross-communications that is now partly responsible for the tolerable congestion of the city centre, because all traffic between these quarters must at present pass through the centre: and while one of the prime objects of any new plan must be to overcome the present lack of cross-communication, it will never be possible on this site to provide the full degree of ease and freedom of movement between the various parts that is desirable in every city.

- University
- Public Buildings
- Educational Buildings
- Institutions
- Residential
- Shopping
- Offices
- Industry
- Workshops
- Warehousing
- Railway
- Public Open Space
- Private Open Space
- Cemeteries

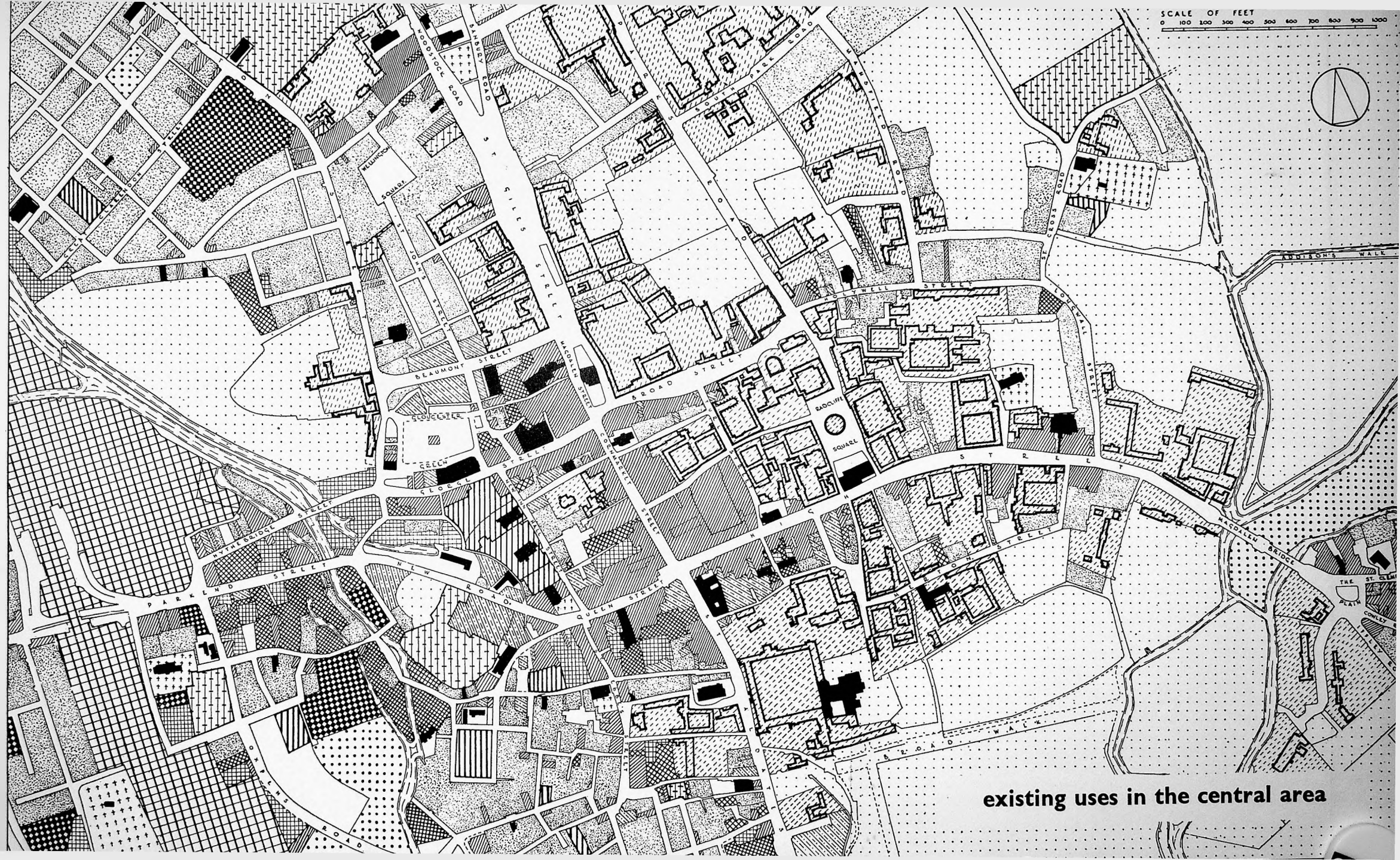


existing uses in the centra

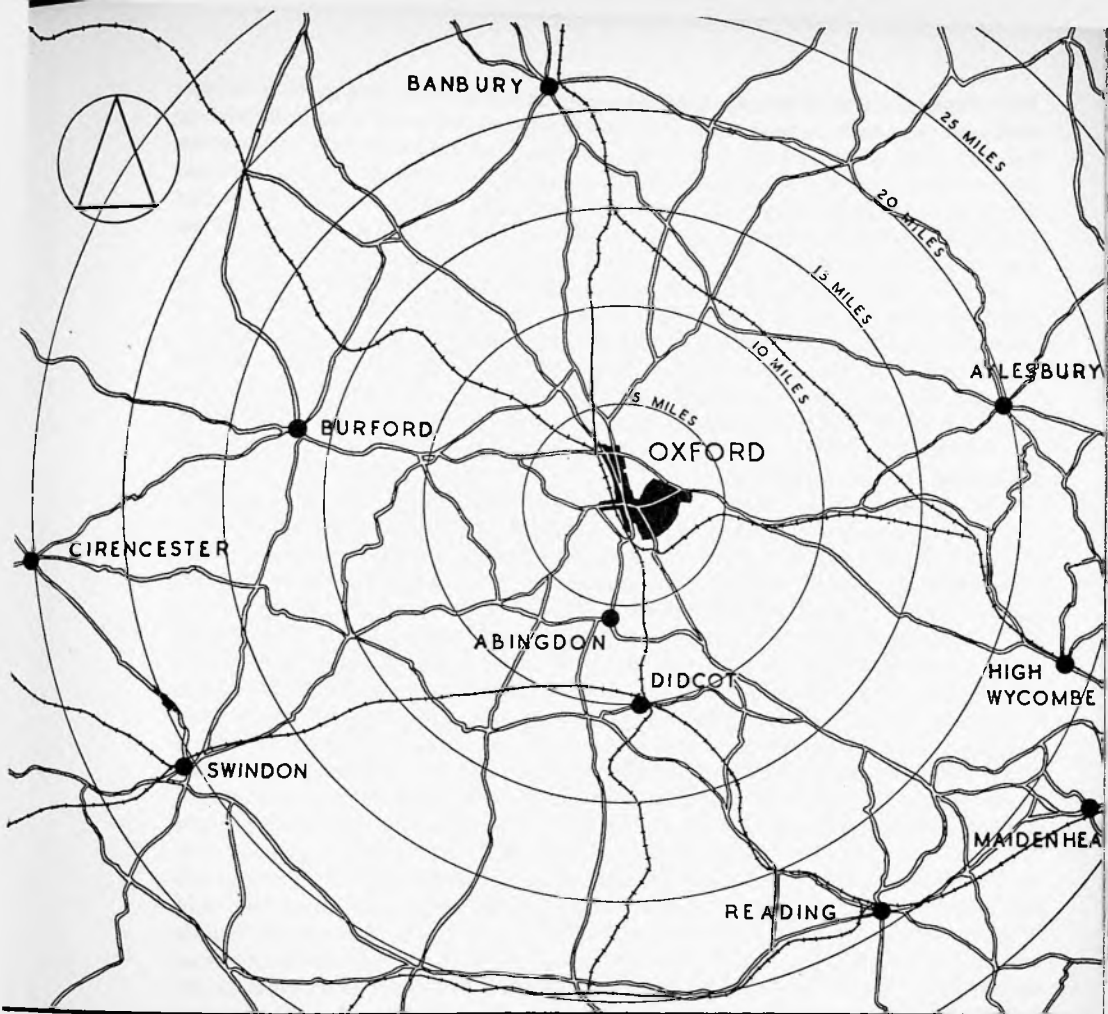
SCALE OF FEET
0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000



- University
- Public Buildings
- Educational Buildings
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existing uses in the central area



Oxford as a regional centre

Besides this, the present city is also too big for the success of some of its prime purposes. While it is well that the University no longer over-dominates Oxford, as it did in the past, it is now itself in danger of being submerged: and some of the conditions which are necessary for its well-being are in danger of being lost, if indeed they are not already lost. Especially the quality of quietness. There is always noise and harassment from traffic in the central parts of a big city; and the bigger the city grows the worse the noise and harassment gets. And this also affects another of Oxford's functions, a secondary function but nevertheless an

important one: that of being a tourist centre. It is true that the provision of new traffic routes (such as those described in Chapter 4) will very materially reduce the disturbance by traffic in the present streets; but that will only remove the disturbance a little from the main university quarters and from High Street and Cornmarket Street: nothing can remove it altogether, for the obvious reason that the amount of traffic in a city is, to a marked extent at least, in proportion to the size of the city.

Another reason which is sometimes advanced against the present size of the city is that not only has it outgrown many of its social amenities, but adequate amenities cannot be provided for the present inhabitants because of the geographical limitations of the site. This is not strictly true. It should be an essential part of any new plan to provide additional amenities in those parts of the centre which are not now used to their full advantage: and this can be done. But while these necessary additional amenities can be provided for the city at something like its present size, they certainly cannot be provided for a city that is much bigger.

If the present city is too large, it will be necessary in planning for the future to consider whether or not it can be reduced. But before proceeding to this it will be as well to consider certain present trends and possibilities which, if they are not arrested, may lead to new and extremely rapid growth in the near future.

The intended industrial expansion of the Nuffield and Pressed Steel undertakings during the next few years has already been indicated (p. 60). The original intention of the Nuffield Organization would have meant a growth, in the joint employment of the companies, of from about 11,500 in 1939 to between 17,000 and 18,000 in the next year or two. A modification in the Nuffield Organization's intentions, due to some degree of realization of the mere material difficulties of providing sufficient houses, has reduced the intended joint employment to between 16,000 and 17,000. This intended expansion sounds big enough even when stated in this bald way. But it is necessary to consider what it means in the much broader terms of its effect on the city. An additional 4,500 workers (i.e. up to a joint employment of 16,000) means a direct addition of something like 16,000 to the city's population: an additional 5,500 workers (i.e. up to a joint employment of 17,000) means a directly additional population of something like 20,000. And it is not just simply that. Under modern conditions of living, especially of urban living, no single body of people is self-sufficient. People create demands for services of all kinds which must be met by other people, and then these other people too need services: so there must come in new tradesmen, new builders, new policemen, new bus-drivers, new workers in public utilities, new school-teachers, and so on. In the case of an addition to an existing city where some of the present services may perhaps be used, it is difficult to say what number of additional people would need to come in to serve the new workers and their families: but it is pretty certain that these intended expansions by the Nuffield Organization and the Pressed Steel Company will, of themselves, add a total of between 25,000 and 30,000 inhabitants to the population of the city. This will mean a city of 125,000 or 130,000 inhabitants.

And it cannot remain at that. The danger and unhealthiness that lay in the domination of the city's industries by these two companies, even in 1939, has already been pointed out. If no additional industries come into the city during the time of this intended new expansion, the Nuffield and Pressed Steel organiza-

tions will employ between them not merely 66·5 per cent. of all the workers in manufacturing industries, as they did in 1939, but no less than 73 per cent.—a condition altogether too full of danger to contemplate without alarm. And if sufficient new factories came in to maintain even the dangerous and unhealthy employment rates of 1939, this would mean a still further addition of some 2,700 workers, and the enlargement of the enlarged city by a further 12,000 or 13,000 inhabitants—which would bring the total population to something like 140,000, and perhaps even more, within the next few years.

All this would be bad enough. But it would be far worse if an attempt were made, and it certainly *should* be made, to correct the occupational unbalance which existed in Oxford before the war. Clearly there can be no exact formula to establish what constitutes a good balance between occupations in a city. It has been argued¹ that a town is becoming dangerously unbalanced when any one industry employs more than a fifth of the wage-earning population engaged in its manufacturing industries. If that is so, then the presence of *two* individual undertakings, each employing about a *third* of the total employed in manufacturing industries (and two undertakings within the same major group at that), constitutes not merely a danger but the positive courting of disaster. And if, following on that, an attempt were made to produce something a little nearer to a balance, by bringing in new industries to an extent which would mean that these two undertakings did not *each* employ more than, say, 20 per cent. of the total workers in manufacturing industries, then that would mean that, on the 1939 basis of their employment, the present population of the city should probably now be about 145,000; and on the basis of their intended expansion it would soon be up to and over 200,000.

In all this calculation of the effect on the city which would be produced by the declared policy of expansion announced by these two industrial undertakings, it has to be remembered that the expansion which has been spoken of is intended to take place within the next few years. There is no kind of assurance that there will not, in another few years' time, be still further substantial expansion—a doubling or a trebling of the factories as they may be at that time. The only thing that is quite clear about it all is that, unless some carefully planned action to the contrary is taken, Oxford is set for becoming a kind of minor English Detroit.

The industrialists themselves are not unaware of the likely effect of their plans on the city and its environs in at least some directions. In his letter of December 4th, 1945, in which he asked the Oxford Corporation to provide houses to accommodate the new workers whom it is intended to bring in, Sir Miles Thomas, Vice-Chairman of the Nuffield Organization, wrote thus:

'Obviously, the amount of new housing that can be arranged within the Oxford City area is limited. Equally, rather than encourage an untidy sprawl of new housing estates, and the consequent uglification of what is one of Britain's most beautiful districts, there is much to recommend the desirability of the administrative area of the Oxford City Council being extended so that it is large enough to permit the creation of satellite townships. These could be planned into existence in a methodical and balanced manner, and have adequate transport and other amenities to enable them to feed the areas in which our industrial activities take place.'

This indeed takes the matter a step farther. There is no recognition here of the effect of great industrial expansion on the city itself, or on its fulfilment of its prime historical functions. All that is recognized is that any further sprawl of the

¹ Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction: evidence before Scott Committee 1941.

city into the surrounding country-side should be stopped. Yet to suggest that future growth should take place by way of 'satellite townships' is only to suggest that the damage should be widened from a city to a district basis, for these so-called 'satellites' would be mere dormitories and they could not, without great personal inconvenience to those of their inhabitants who were also workers in the expanded factories, be situated more than a mile or so beyond the present suburbs. This would merely mean that a still wider area would be suburbanized—or it would *merely* mean so in the physical field, for in the social field the gathering of workers into dormitories of this sort would mean something even more regrettable in that it would create precisely the evils which modern planning sets out to avoid and if possible to overcome; evils, for instance, such as the segregation of the population by occupation and class into groups too small and too inadequately diversified to be able to develop into genuine communities. It may well be that Oxford may be saved by the decanting of its industry and not merely of some of its industrial population into genuine satellite towns at least *ten* miles away in the region round about. But the form of development suggested by the industrialists is not that; and it is no kind of solution at all to the problems that will be created by the city's further growth.

To many people now living in Oxford the assessment of the desirability or undesirability of the city's expansion by reference to its prime historical functions as a university city and a market town may seem to be wrong, and perhaps even irrelevant. To these people the question of the city's future size must be posed in another way. There are three ways. *Firstly*, leaving aside altogether any consideration of the University's needs, what are the advantages to be gained by further growth? Are there any essential utilities or services which the city is denied by having a population of only 100,000 instead of 200,000? The answer surely is that there are not. Here in the present Oxford there are, or could be, schools, cinemas, theatres, societies, shops in satisfactory quantity and variety. The water-supply would not be better if the city were twice as big; nor would the sewerage system, nor the public library. The local rates would not necessarily be a penny lower. Perhaps the city might be able to afford and support a First Division football team if it had as much population as Middlesbrough; but that is the only advantage which that town has over Oxford, even though it is a good deal bigger—and as an advantage it is, after all, rather a minor one. *Secondly*, what are the disadvantages in *not* growing bigger? The answer again is that there are none of any consequence. And *thirdly*, what are the advantages of staying at something like the present size or even of declining a little? To which the main additional answer is that, big though the present city is, it is still possible to get out into the surrounding country-side with reasonable quickness and ease—and it certainly will not be so if the town goes on growing as it has recently.

In face of all this, there can be little doubt that the city should not be allowed to go on growing bigger. But even if the two great industrial undertakings could be restricted to their pre-war size, how can the industrial and occupational balance which has been spoken of be achieved when its achievement will necessitate the bringing in of suitable new industries? That dilemma is the very heart and core of the problem of Oxford's future.

There is no escape from the fact that the only way in which the city can retain its historical character, can successfully continue in its historical prime functions,

and can achieve a better occupational balance while remaining at approximately its present size, is by the transference from it of the two great industrial concerns which now dominate it. It has already been pointed out that there is no sound economic or social reason why these industries should be in Oxford. On the contrary there are very substantial reasons, even in the interests of the undertakings themselves, why they should not be there. The motor works came more or less by accident. They stay more or less because of the sentiment involved in Lord Nuffield's associations with the city. But that is not a very secure reason: and there have for years past been fears that the Nuffield Organization may one day remove itself entirely from Oxford. Indeed that fear seemed to be given formal justification by the Organization's letter of December 4th, 1945, demanding that the Corporation should build houses for the Nuffield workers. In pointing out that 'the availability of labour is conditioned by the availability of houses for workers to live in', Sir Miles Thomas went on to say:

'Unless the supply of labour is sufficient to enable the Cowley factory to assemble cars, paint bodies, do upholstery and carry out similar processes to a very considerable extent, it means that the ability of workers in our Coventry engine factory, our Birmingham axle factory, and our other auxiliary factories, must be limited. Rather than envisage any such limitation we would have to consider moving the location of the processes now carried out at Cowley, and that, naturally, would entail a wholesale transplantation, as it would not be economic to disperse or divide an existing unit which, for economy of production, must be kept as large as possible.'

It is true that, at a conference which was held after that letter was written, when the impossibility of meeting the Organization's demands was made known and when the possibility of the removal of the Cowley works was accepted as a basis of discussion, the Organization's representative took a somewhat different line. He then said that there were very grave difficulties in the factory's being transplanted to another area: that its roots are in Oxford: that the Cowley factory represents the focal point of the Organization's activity in the Midlands: that the Organization considered that it had a prior right to stay in Oxford. Nevertheless, in spite of this late withdrawal of what at the time was regarded as a very real threat, it is clear that the transfer of the factory to another place has actually been contemplated, and that it could be undertaken. There is little doubt that the transfer would be made if it became essential to go elsewhere to assure the commercial success of the undertaking. And if it could be made for commercial reasons, it can equally well be made for social and cultural reasons.

Clearly the transfer of the Nuffield works will not be easy. There is much heavy equipment; there are many expensive installations; and the whole of the processes in the factory are so interlocked on the assembly-line system of production that everything will have to go together. That will be a matter requiring careful organization in advance: it will require the building up of new works elsewhere while the Cowley plant remains in full production, and then, when the new works are ready, a complete transference of production from the old plant on some given date. But it is a matter largely of organization. There need be little or no interference with production (any large interference would, of course, be a serious matter in these post-war years, and must be avoided). Remarkably smooth and efficient transferees of this kind were undertaken on a very large scale during the war, and if they can be undertaken in war-time they can equally well be undertaken in peace-time.

The same kinds of consideration apply also to the transfer of the Pressed Steel works, though here, possibly, some parts in the undertaking (such, for example, as the manufacture of refrigerators) might with benefit remain in Oxford if the processing system within the factory will allow that.¹ The Pressed Steel works in their total bulk are as big a danger as the Nuffield works, for though they were started as a subsidiary of the Nuffield Organization, they have already outstripped in size their parent undertaking.

The transfer of these two dominant elements outwards is, however, only one part of this possible solution of the city's problems of growth and function. That transfer, if undertaken, will directly involve a quarter and a third of the whole of the city's inhabitants: indirectly it will involve a great many more. It is difficult to estimate what number of workers will decide to move with the works: certainly by no means all, probably not even half of them will—though this no doubt would depend a great deal on whether or not houses are easily available in the new locality. What is quite certain is that a great many will prefer to stay in Oxford. And, for these, new forms of employment must be found. So the other part of the solution of this great problem lies in the attraction, into the city, of the right kinds of new work, in the right proportion, and to the right total size.

The coming in of new works will need to coincide roughly with the going out of the old. If it does not, grave social problems will result. But it does not by any means follow that the new total of employment must exactly equal to-day's employment. Everything will depend on the (at present) unassessable number of workers who will transfer with the Nuffield and Pressed Steel works to some new place. The work to be brought in will be the work necessary to support the remainder: that and no more. Clearly no *new* workers should be brought in, except, possibly, a few 'key' men who may be required to get the new works into operation. Indeed, if a substantial number of Nuffield and Pressed Steel workers transfer to some new place along with the works, this would not only lessen the number of new factories which would have to be established: it would materially benefit the city in another of its problems, that of providing sufficient houses for its inhabitants. It has been estimated (p. 55) that some 8,000 new houses will be needed, including those necessary to house people now living in slums and badly blighted districts. If only a quarter of Nuffield and Pressed Steel workers left the city, that would probably reduce the total number of necessary new houses by at least 2,000. If a third left, the number would probably be reduced by 3,000 or more. And if these things happened it would also mean, in the first case, a reduction in the total population to a figure of just over 90,000; and, in the second case, a reduction to a figure of, probably, about 87,000.

All this change will obviously require the most careful and far-reaching organization over a wide field in which no local government authority can itself operate. Such an operation, such a piece of bold and decisive planning, can only be undertaken with the concurrence of the central government, and indeed under its direct initiative and responsibility. But if the future of the city is a matter of national importance, then the safeguarding of that future is a national duty. And, with the powers and resources which the Government now possesses, even a complicated and delicate programme of action, such as this undertaking will need,

¹ All these details of transference and subdivision require the high skill of production experts and are far outside the scope of this report.

should not prove unduly difficult. Private enterprise has, of course, performed the easier part of the task often enough in the past—as at Jarrow, for example, where practically the whole of the town's industry, and a well-equipped efficient industry at that, was scrapped and put permanently out of action for purely commercial reasons, without regard to the effect of the action on the town and its citizens. Public enterprise, in government-nominated organizations, is about to undertake the more difficult *whole* task in its establishment of a series of new towns, each complete with a well-balanced industrial structure, around London and in other places. The new-balancing of the industrial structure of Oxford is no more difficult an operation than this—and it is at least as important. Government is even now, on a very large scale, actively directing new works to the old distressed areas, the so-called Development Areas (though what is intended in that official title is not development but redevelopment). Oxford has an unassailable claim to be regarded as a Redevelopment Area. Its economic-social problems are very similar in some ways to those of Durham and South Wales: and in addition it has the very special problems connected with the maintenance of its physical character. It is as much in need of national assistance as Bishop Auckland or Merthyr Tydfil, though for different reasons.

There is no doubt that the operations here suggested *could* be undertaken if government saw fit to undertake them. This plan for Oxford is therefore based on the removal of the present over-dominant industries, and the substitution of more-diversified industries in proper measure in their place. And the kind of city which is planned here is a city at most no bigger than the present one, and preferably one with its population reduced to a figure of 90,000 or even slightly less: a city whose prime functions are to be a university city and a county and regional capital: a city in which, though manufacturing will not be a prime function, there will nevertheless be a sufficiency of well-balanced and well-diversified industries to assure its social health and material well-being.

There is a further matter which must be considered in settling the basis for the planning of the future city. The possibility of creating 'twin cities', divided by the Cherwell, has been much discussed as a solution of the difficulties that have followed on the development of the two great industrial enterprises. The idea is that there should be historical Oxford as a more or less self-contained flourishing city on the west of Magdalen Bridge, and Cowley-Oxford as a self-contained flourishing city on the east. It is too innocent and too easy a conception. It ignores all the realities. It ignores those parts west of Magdalen, i.e. North Oxford, Cutteslowe, Botley, Hinksey, and Abingdon Road, which are in precisely the same relationship to the historical city as Marston, Headington, Cowley, and Iffley are. It ignores geography, while considering only space. It ignores economics. It ignores history (for all similar attempts, in the past, have failed; and in all natural twin-growths one 'twin' has dominated the other, so that instead of 'twins' there has in the end been a city and a satellite). It ignores *people*. It sets up the purely and patently artificial against the natural. It is an escapist dream. Instead of solving Oxford's difficulties it would immensely increase them. As a basis for planning it is unrealistic, unsound, and most highly dangerous. Whatever difficulties have come to it, Oxford remains and will remain, *one* city. The aim of planning should be the integration, not the disintegration, of its parts.

3

LIMITS OF GROWTH

Even if the city declines slightly in population, the building of new houses will have to go on. The greater part of the four or five thousand families who are on the waiting-list for council houses will still want new houses, as will most of the people now living in slums and blighted districts. In addition, other new buildings of various kinds will be needed—new schools, hospitals, and the like. Some of these new buildings will occupy old sites. But by far the greater part must occupy areas not hitherto used for urban purposes. So although the city may decline in size of population it must grow in actual physical size. And one of the most important considerations in formulating a plan for the future must be to determine where this new growth shall take place.

A city should be as compact as the observance of proper standards of light, air, and living space will permit. Ideally it should take a roughly circular form about the centre where the main social and commercial activities take place. But, in spite of ideal patterns, the physical nature of the terrain and other geographical factors will determine its shape: and at Oxford these are even more than usually powerful in producing a city that is by no means ideal in form.

The factors which direct the physical growth of the city are shown graphically on page 87. The chief factor is that which has given the city its present form, i.e. the presence, alongside the Thames and the Cherwell, of extensive lands which are either actually subject to flooding or have so high a water-table (water lying permanently just below ground surface) as to be unsuitable for prolonged human habitation. This particular factor could not be ignored, even in the past. But other factors which have been ignored hitherto must now be given decisive importance in the selection of sites for living. Thus steep northern slopes and broken ground are nowadays automatically ruled out for housing use: the one because of the difficulty (and even the impossibility) of building so that houses can get the sunlight which is desirable for healthy living, and the other because of the difficulties and high additional costs of building, making roads, laying sewers, and so

the villages round Oxford have suffered greatly from

suburban expansion. Cumnor, Hinksey, Headington, Iffley, and others have been submerged. Elsfield, Beckley, and many more have been much damaged. But some still survive without serious harm. They should be safeguarded against damage now. Marston (opposite, top), though it is actually joined to Oxford's suburban outskirts, has maintained its character well. Wytham (below), an 'estate village' at the entrance to the great property which the University now holds, has escaped molestation because it was jealously guarded by the owner and because it was geographically isolated.





Binsey village has retained its character because of its

isolation (opposite, above). It is approachable only over the open elemental levels of Port Meadow, Oxford's great thousand-year-old common (opposite, below). Though only a mile and a half from Carfax on a direct line, Binsey is entirely free from suburban additions and is 'earthy' to a degree. Village and common have a striking medieval quality even to-day.

on. This eliminates patches of land on the hilly ground to the west of the city (especially about Cumnor) and to the east (especially at Shotover). Then it is clearly sensible to concentrate future building into areas where necessary services can be supplied without excessive and uneconomical expenditure of public money—services such as sewerage and the supply of water, electricity, and gas. This again eliminates many areas, including practically all the land outside the city boundaries.

But there are other considerations than the suitability or unsuitability of land for building. Qualities like mere suitability must be subject to wider overriding principles concerning the public good. There is, for example, the matter of satisfying the needs of communication. External traffic should remain outside the city. A by-pass of national importance has been constructed on the east and north: there is only one suitable line, and that close into the city, for a similar by-pass on the west (see Chapter 4). The city cannot be allowed to stultify these national trunk roads by flowing over and beyond them, and indeed for the safety and convenience of its inhabitants it should not do so (which does not, of course, mean that the city should be constricted by the by-passes, but only that it should, if possible, be contained within them, and if it *must* grow beyond them, then it should be in a form so organized that traffic between parts of the city lying on different sides of the by-passes should not interrupt the traffic there—which in turn means the formation of satellite townships). And another and even more important example of the fact of mere suitability for building not being the main consideration in determining the use of land is the value of the land for agricultural purposes. There was a time, not long ago, when all land round a town was held to be 'ripe for development'—and development in this sense meant only building. That time, happily, has gone: and the claims of agriculture may not now be ignored.

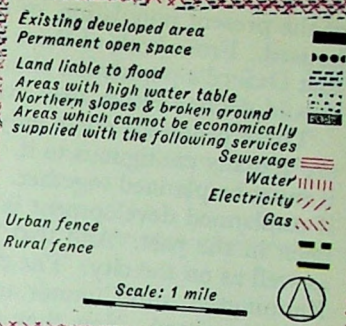
Officers of the Ministry of Agriculture, which is now a partner with the Ministry of Town and Country Planning in the supervision of the planning of all rural land, have made a detailed survey of the agricultural area round Oxford. As a result of this survey two lines, or 'fences', have been prescribed. The first, the Urban Fence, fixes an area within which the Ministry of Agriculture (except for its statutory obligations with regard to allotments) will raise no objection to general building operations. In fact the fixing of this Fence gives a clearance to building operations within it, so far as the Ministry of Agriculture is concerned. The second line is the Rural Fence. This is coterminous with the Urban Fence in some places and in others lies beyond it. It is the Ministry's view that the land beyond the Rural Fence should remain predominantly agricultural, that no close building should be permitted there, and that while certain building for non-agricultural purposes may possibly take place it will be deemed to be justified only if it can be shown to be in the public interest. As for the land between these two

sieve map for building sites

Fences, this may be described as being subject to a 'time-zoning'. Here no permission for immediate building is given by the Ministry of Agriculture; and, though such a clearance may be given if and when the necessity for the land's release for building purposes can be proved, no sporadic building which would injure the agricultural usefulness of the land should be permitted in the meanwhile.

The Urban and Rural Fences that have been fixed for Oxford are much too involved to be described in detail here. They can be seen in the diagram on page 87. For the most part both Fences are close into the present urban area. The Rural Fence naturally includes more land, but in some places it is cancelled out because of the difficulty and expense of providing public services. This is so, for example, over some areas north of the Northern By-pass at Cutteslowe, at North Hinksey, and south of the railway beyond Littlemore. In other places, as in the neighbourhood of Horspath, it contains areas which should not be brought within the general building area of the city, if that can be avoided, because they are severed from that area by arterial roads or major open spaces. Little reliance can therefore be put on a hope of bringing the land-within-the-Fences into the area for building. The Urban Fence indicates the likely ultimate limit of continuous urban development, and not merely an intermediate limit. And the line of that Fence happily coincides to a very close degree with the boundaries for development which would be arrived at out of a consideration of good *town* planning alone, without any special consideration of good rural planning.

The result of all this 'sieving-out' is that the only areas which should be given over to building within the city boundaries, or contiguous to it, are areas which are either already in course of development for building purposes or subject to urban influences to a very marked degree. These areas are for the most part comparatively small and are scattered about the present suburban edge, though occasionally they are areas closer in which have been over-leapt by suburbia. The Southfield Golf Course is an example of the latter; and areas about North Hinksey of the former. In short, the new growth should consist of a consolidation of the present urbanized area rather than any extensive use of new land. The total area which remains after the 'sieving-out', and after the deduction of sites that should be used for major open spaces, amounts to just over 1,000 acres, including the rehousing areas in the central parts of the city. Reckoning on an average density of 30 persons per acre over this area (parts of which will, of course, be used for roads, incidental open spaces, local shopping and neighbourhood centres, local workshops, and so on) the number of people who could be newly housed or rehoused here will be about 30,000. It has already been shown that there is a need for some 8,000 new dwellings. At the present average of 3.7 persons per family these dwellings will house about 30,000 people. If the size of family increases, as all who have realized the implication of the recent low birth-rate hope that it will, they will, of course, house more: with an average family of four, for instance, they will house 32,000. This means that the building areas available, after an examination of physical considerations, *and without reference to the general question of the desirable size of the future city in terms of population*, will provide only for a city



of the present population, or rather less, if all that population was reasonably well housed. From both of these separate considerations, then, good planning means that Oxford's population should not exceed 100,000, and that if it changes at all it should decline rather than increase.

These proposals relate only to the area of the city and the urbanized areas that are actually contiguous to it. But it is obvious that the city and the district round it must be planned together. The whole purpose of the city plan will be defeated if unplanned development is permitted in the surrounding country-side as it has been in the past. And that will be regrettable for its effect on the country-side as well as on the city. The disorderly colonies that have grown up at Kidlington, Kennington, and Cumnor are lamentable in every way. They should never have been permitted. Now they are there some slight growth by way of consolidating their loose straggles will have to be permitted. And some light consolidations may also be permitted at Boars Hill. But elsewhere in the country-side that lies immediately around the city no further building should be permitted, except that which may be necessary in villages *for rural purposes*. If the establishment of any true 'satellites' to Oxford becomes necessary, they should be established ten miles or more away. All this is, of course, matter for a regional plan. But no one preparing a plan for the city alone can ignore it. And the plan which is put forward here is based on the argument that not only will the city's population not increase but there should, besides, be no substantial increase in population within a radius of at least ten miles from the city centre.

4

COMMUNICATIONS

§ I. ROADS

Like every other old-founded city, Oxford exists because its site is a good natural crossing-place for communications. Its central patch of gravel, raised some twenty feet above the level of the Thames and the Cherwell, was the one place in a stretch of twenty miles or more where a good crossing of the marsh-edged rivers could be made in early times. It was to this fact that the city owed its foundation long before the University came. It is to the same fact that it owes its desperate traffic problems to-day.

(a) *The Present Position*

The city is probably the most important nodal-point in the road system of southern England outside London. Here the road between London and the lowest bridging-point of the Severn at Gloucester crosses the fork of the Y made by the roads from the east Midlands and west Midlands where they join to proceed to Southampton. In addition to these national routes, four other first-class arteries centre here. And so, of course, do a number of important regional and local roads. When a complex of roads like this ends up in a crossing of two medieval streets which have also, in the absence of any other single cross-town route, to carry the whole of the cross-traffic of a city of 100,000 inhabitants, then it is inevitable that there should be confusion and congestion. The inevitable happens at Oxford as elsewhere.

The congestion at Carfax and in Cornmarket Street and High Street has already been referred to. It must be referred to again—and no doubt again and yet again. It is the great inescapable fact of modern Oxford. Various other attributes of Oxford life make varying impacts on various people. On only one point is everyone who has ever been to Oxford during the last twenty years agreed. Cornmarket Street and High Street are synonyms for congestion—congestion of the most wasteful, exasperating, and maddening kind. There cannot be many streets in the world more congested than Cornmarket Street at its bad periods: and its bad periods do not occur only a few times a year at holiday week-ends, but several times every day, week in and week out. There are few places even in London to beat it. There may, in some streets in other cities, be more vehicles and more people passing in a whole day or even a single hour: but there can be few places where this number of vehicles and cycles contend for movement on this width of carriageway, and these crowds of people struggle to advance along pavements as narrow as these.¹

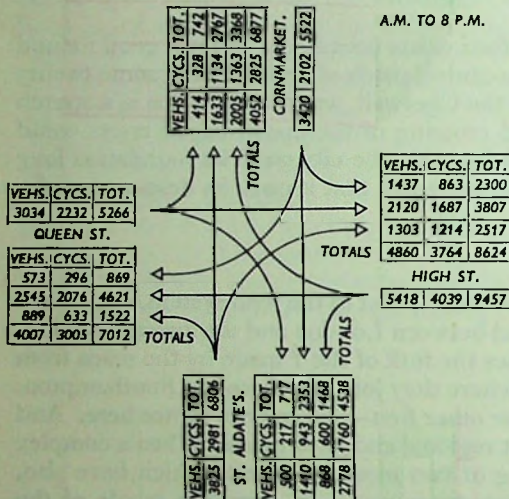
¹ Cornmarket Street: average width of carriageway 32.5 ft.; narrowest width 25.0 ft.; average width of pavement 8.0 ft.; narrowest width 6.0 ft.

Carfax traffic charts

Below, Thursday, July 18th, and Friday, July 19th, 1946
Opposite, Friday, July 19th, 1946 (8 a.m. to 8 p.m.)

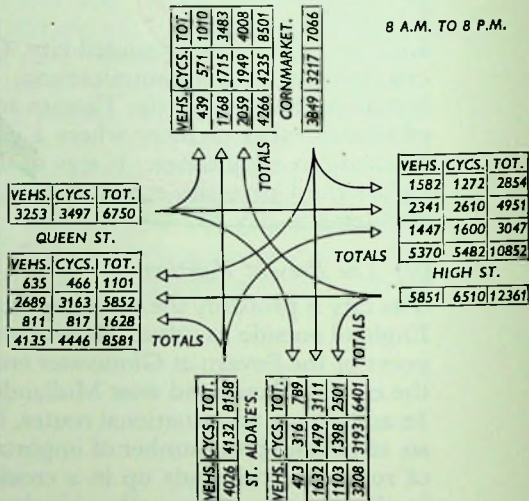
THURSDAY JULY 18TH

A.M. TO 8 P.M.

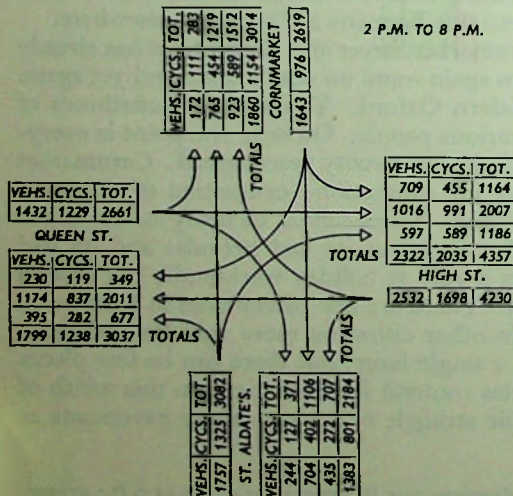


FRIDAY JULY 19TH

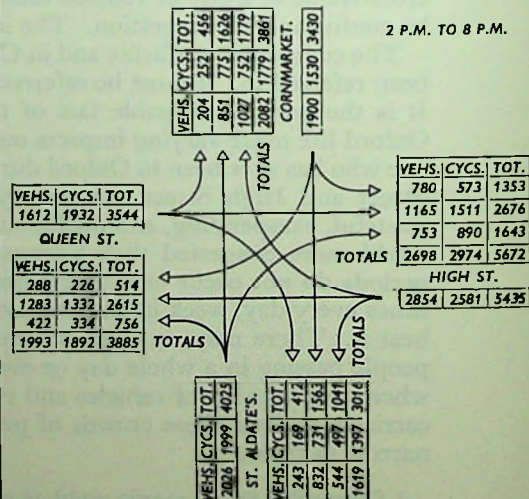
8 A.M. TO 8 P.M.



2 P.M. TO 8 P.M.



2 P.M. TO 8 P.M.



and petrol, these figures are nothing like what they might be. Traffic is still far less than it was before the war. In 1938,¹ for example, the huge total of 42,215 vehicles (including 24,221 bicycles) passed over Magdalen Bridge between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. on a Wednesday in mid-August. All but a fraction of the 17,984 motor vehicles in this total² must have passed down High Street from Carfax, since the only traffic road joining High Street is Longwall Street, and the traffic on that street is *comparatively* small. If there had been no war and the continuous annual increase in the number of motor vehicles had gone on, as it undoubtedly would, High Street would now be a solid mass of stationary cars along its whole half-mile length, many times every day. Even before the war traffic jams stretching that distance were not unknown. In a few years, when the war-time leeway in car production has been made up, High Street and Cornmarket Street will be almost unusable by traffic merely because they will be solidly blocked by traffic (unless some alternative routes are available for it)—and since these streets, and the two others forming the Carfax crossing, are the *only* streets through the city, it will mean that the city centre will become almost completely paralysed.

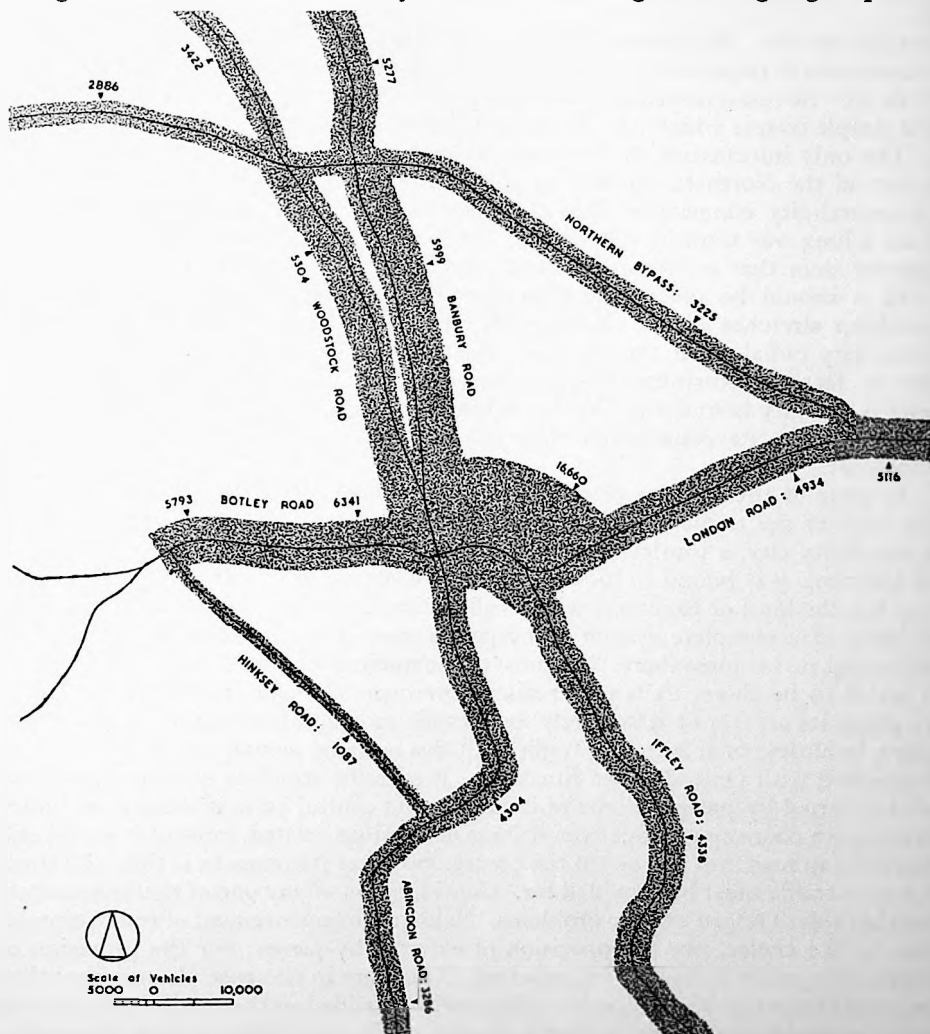
It will be noticed that, in the figures given above, some prominence has been accorded to the number of bicycles that help to make up the total volume of traffic at the various points mentioned. In most English towns and cities bicycle traffic can be more or less ignored as a factor contributing to traffic congestion. It cannot be ignored in Oxford. The bicycle is not only one of the main components in any Oxford landscape: it is one of the main causes of traffic congestion. According to a register kept by the police, there are no less than 44,500 bicycles in this city (whose population of 100,000 includes, of course, babes in arms and grandfathers and grandmothers, who do not generally ride bicycles). On all the central streets the number of bicycles is only a little less than half the total number of vehicles. On one street it is often more than half. In Cornmarket Street, cyclists, and pedestrians overflowing from pavements to carriageway, reduce the 32-foot wide carriageway (which might ordinarily just manage to function as a four-lane street) to an effective capacity of only two lanes for vehicles on more than two wheels. So these, and the 24,000 two-wheeled vehicles that are propelled over Magdalen Bridge in a single day, cannot be lightly dismissed as a number of mere bicycles. A few locusts are of little importance. A swarm is a plague.

The most vital question to be answered in any attempt to rid Oxford of this plague of general traffic is—where does it come from and where does it go? How much of it is traffic which merely passes through the city and has no real business there, or traffic between one part of the city and another? Unfortunately that question cannot be answered accurately. To attempt, in a traffic count, to ascertain the point of departure and the destination of every vehicle passing along the

¹ For details of the traffic count in this year see Appendix 4 (b), p. 220.

² As compared with 11,000 motors in High Street, at Carfax, on the Wednesday in July 1946 when the count referred to above was taken—though this 1946 count began two hours later in the morning and finished two hours earlier in the evening. For a comparison with the total of 42,215 vehicles at Magdalen Bridge (a single roadway) in 16 hours in 1938, London's Oxford Circus (four cross-roads) had 36,740 in 12 hours in 1939, and the Elephant and Castle junction (six cross-roads) had 35,911. It is true that over 24,221 of the vehicles at Magdalen were bicycles whereas there are few bicycles in London: but even if one reckons two bicycles to a car, the total would still be 30,094 vehicles on High Street's single carriageway.

central streets would merely turn those streets into a solid immovable block of vehicles within a quarter of an hour, and thereafter the city would no longer function as a city, and the attempt would merely stultify its own intention. It would be less nearly impossible, though still extremely hazardous, to take a count of this kind immediately *outside* the centre, in the inner suburbs. But it would be comparatively simple to take a count where the roads enter the city boundary—though this would be a count only of traffic emanating from or going to places



traffic density 1938

Average daily number of vehicles (excluding bicycles) recorded between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. during the week August 15th to August 21st, 1938: for detailed figures and including bicycles, see Appendix 4 (b), p. 220.

Tom Tower, the western gateway to Christ Church

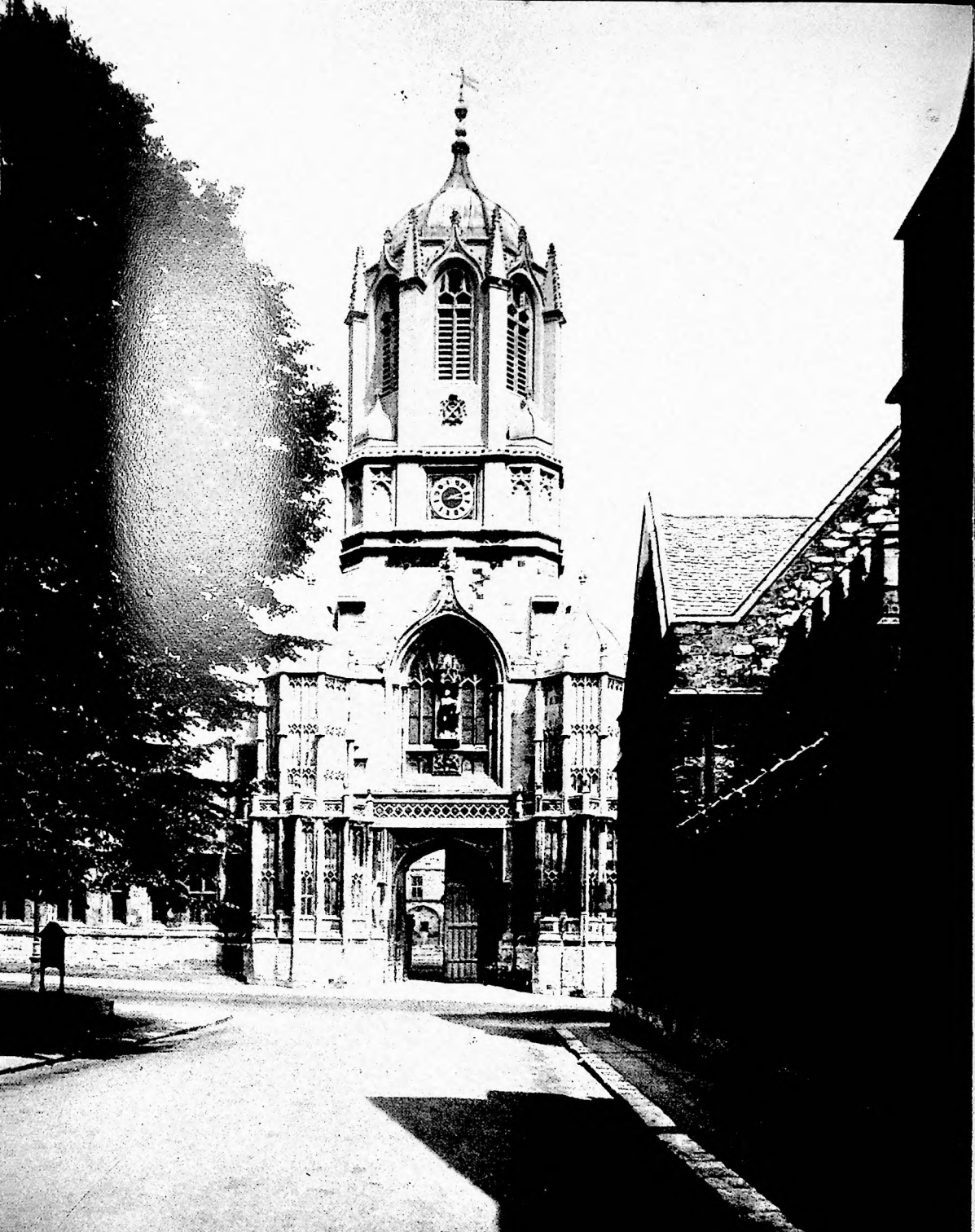
(and entrance to the Cathedral), is one of the famous, though by no means one of the tallest, features of the Oxford skyline. This view of it on the opposite page is from the approach to Pembroke College. The view over-page (left) is from the gateway of the Tower, looking across the Great Quad of Christ Church to the Cathedral spire beyond. The other view over-page (right) is of the cloisters at Corpus Christi.

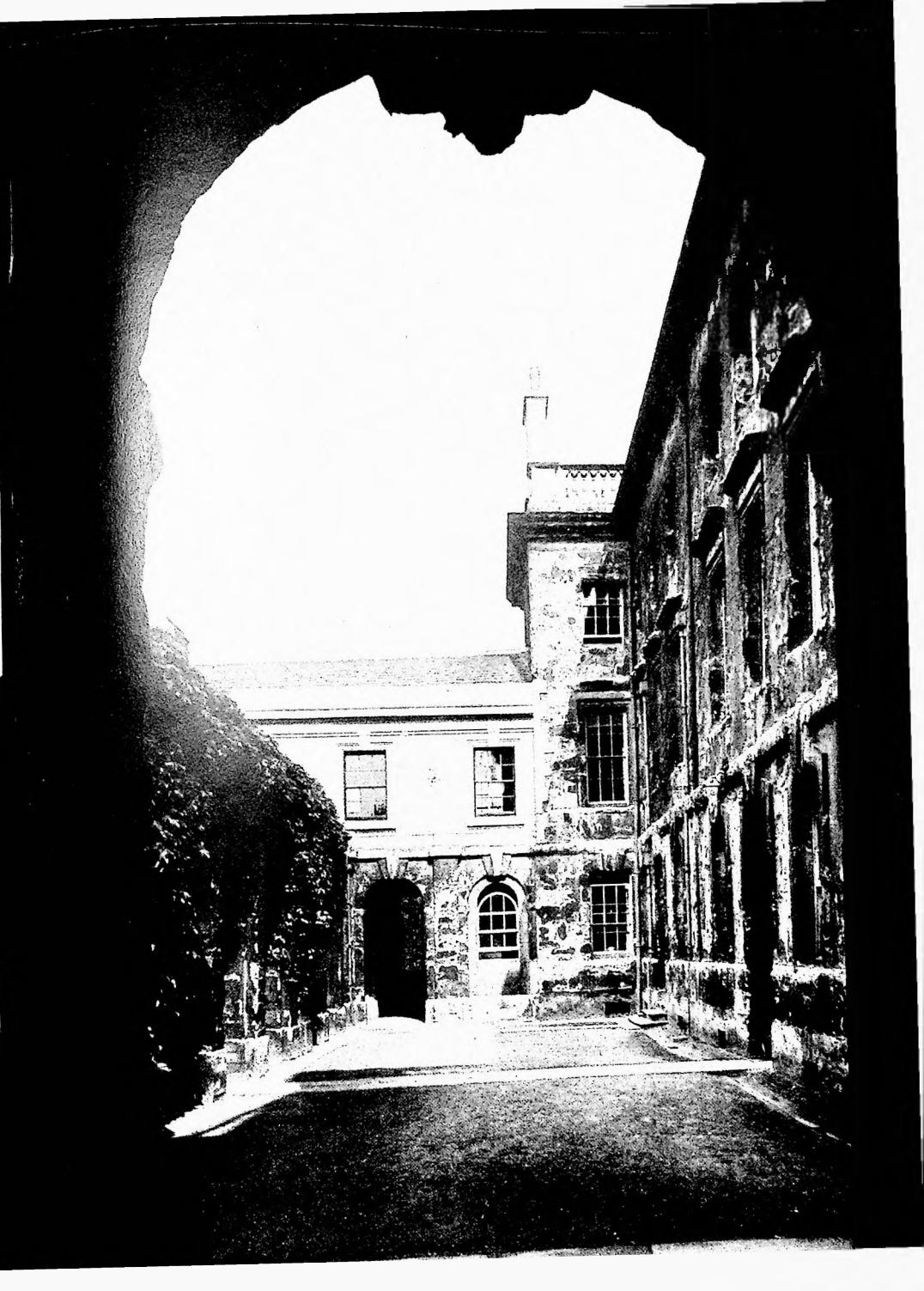
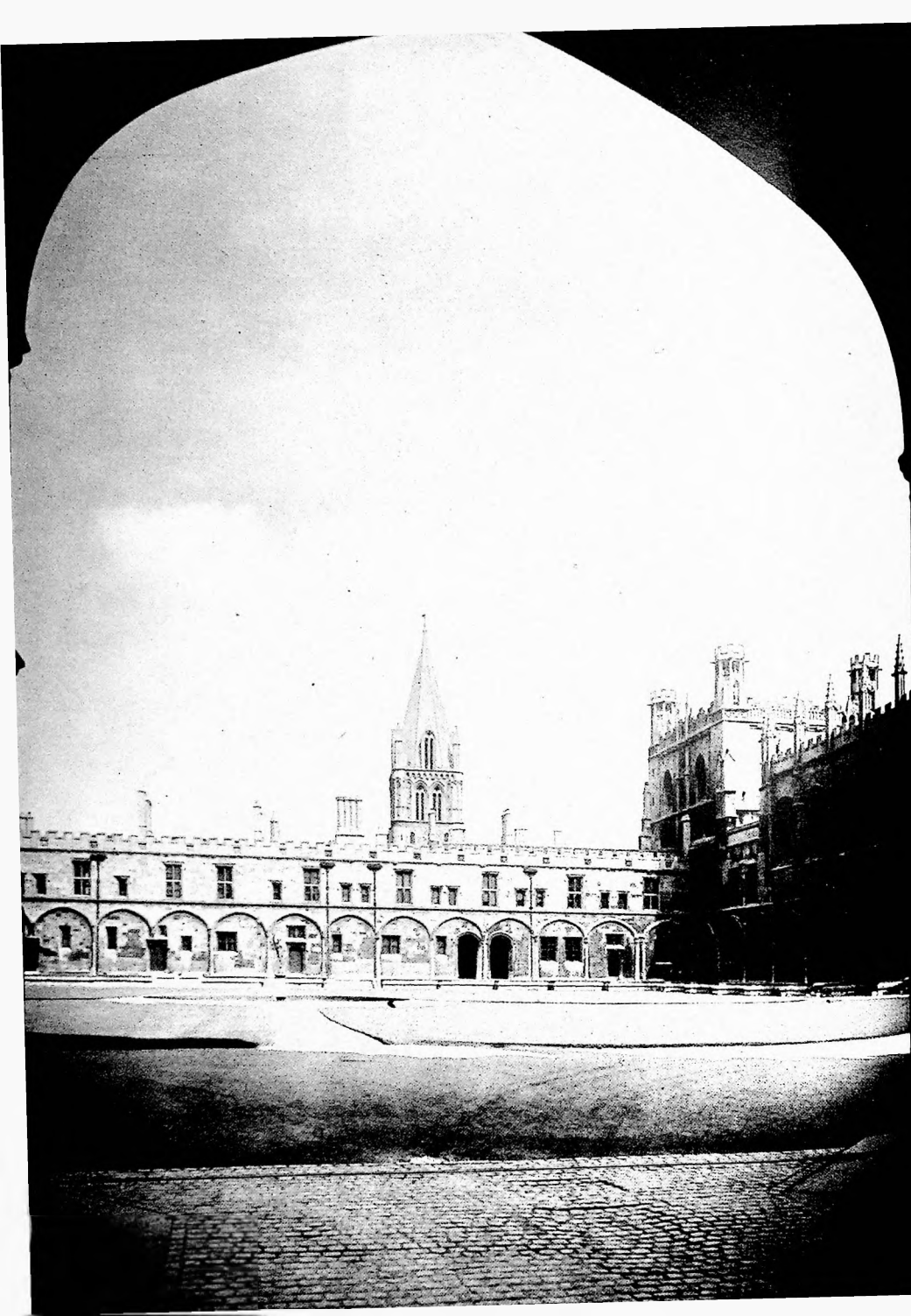
outside the city. Unfortunately it has been found impossible in the present circumstances to organize this latter count (chiefly because of shortage of people able to do it).¹ So one is driven back to attempt to deduce the movement of traffic from the simple counts which have been made in the past.

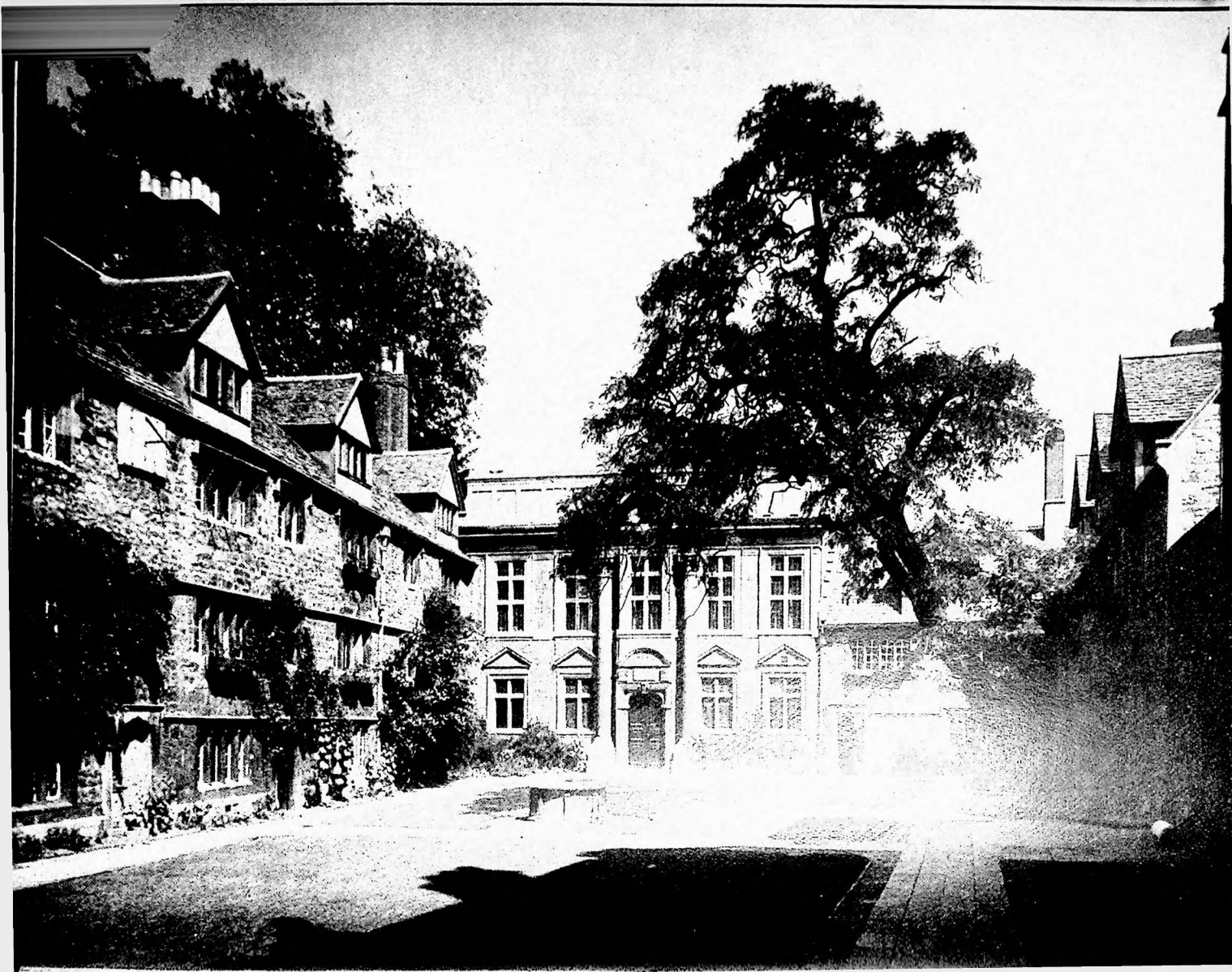
The only information of much significance is that which was obtained in the count on the Northern By-pass in 1938. If *through*-traffic were the chief cause of central-city congestion, then the construction of this by-pass should have gone a long way towards relieving it, for the traffic on this trunk road is much heavier than that on the north-south trunk, which still runs through the city (and it should be noted that Abingdon Road and Littlemore Road, the two southern stretches of the north-south arteries, both carry less traffic than any other city radial, even though there is at present no by-pass to relieve them). But in fact the Northern By-pass carried far less than any other Class I road within the city boundaries. Which means that while it affords very useful relief to city roads, its construction has had no decisive effect on Oxford's traffic problems.

In spite of the absence of reliable statistics there can be no doubt at all that the bulk of the traffic in the centre of Oxford is *city* traffic. As a county town, a university city, a tourist centre (to say nothing of having as large a population as 100,000), it is bound to induce a heavy concentration of traffic on itself. The city has the kind of functions which call traffic into being. It is clear that in the absence of a complete system of by-passes *some* traffic passes through the city which has no business there. But most of the traffic in Oxford is in Oxford because it wants to be there. It is either district or regional traffic moving into, out of, or about its centre; or it is purely local traffic moving about various parts of the city's localities; or it is tourist traffic. All this is traffic arising out of and directly concerned with Oxford's own functions. It is traffic which is quite unconcerned with external by-passes. Some of it could avoid central parts if there were better cross-town connexions. But even if these connexions existed, most of it would still continue to pass into and out of the centre. So what it comes to is this. All these kinds of traffic must be provided for. Consideration of any one of them separately will not solve Oxford's traffic problems. Neither the improvement of traffic circulation in the centre, nor the provision of external by-passes, nor the provision of cross-town roads will alone be sufficient. These are in no sense alternatives: they are supplementary to each other. All must be provided so that non-city traffic can remain outside altogether, so that cross-city traffic can remain outside the centre, and so that central city traffic may pass along routes where it will not cause confusion and disturbance to the very functions which bring it into being.

¹ The police, whose assistance is indispensable in a count of this kind, have, for very good reasons, been unable to collaborate.







the essential spirit of Oxford-the-university-city is

contained in the college quads, like the small one at St. Edmund Hall (opposite) and those of Christ Church and Corpus Christi (back over-page), and fifty others. In spite of the architectural riches which the streets show, greater riches lie behind the college frontages. In this Oxford is different from most cities. It is more secretive, more inward-looking. Beauty is not paraded, displayed, made obvious. Rather it is a retiring and reticent beauty—and one which for that very reason holds, in its intricacy, greater delights and more enduring riches than it could possibly have were its appeal more open-handed and more immediate.

(b) External By-passes

Two by-passes already exist. One, the Northern By-pass, enables traffic on Trunk Road No. 10 to avoid the city: the other, the so-called Southern By-pass,¹ runs from nowhere to nowhere, and has not hitherto served any useful traffic purpose at all.

They have one feature in common. They show how the purpose of a by-pass can be stultified almost as soon as work on it is finished. Both are now heavily compromised. North Oxford has flowed over the Northern By-pass at Cutteslowe; and East Oxford is now flooding beyond it with hundreds of council houses at Barton. On the western side of the Hinksey Road the new suburbs of North Hinksey and Cumnor sprinkle the 'muffled hill'. It is already necessary to by-pass these by-passes—and that, unfortunately, cannot be done except at Barton.

If what's done cannot now be undone, at least the same kind of mistake need not be made again. It will be the height of absurdity if the city again sprawls over the very roads which have been built for no other purpose than to avoid it. If planning means anything, the situation of new by-pass roads will partly decide and partly be decided by the maximum extent of the continuously built-up area of the city. And this means that their routes should be determined with an eye not only to traffic considerations but to the size of the future city as well.

The *Northern By-pass* is made, and there is nothing to be done about its situation now, except to construct a new stretch (which fortunately is as convenient as the old line) running along the Bayswater Brook so as to by-pass the new housing quarters at Barton. There is, however, a good deal to be done, in detail, to safeguard and improve the road's usefulness. No new buildings should be allowed to front on to it, and no new road allowed to join it (except the new Western By-pass mentioned below). It will need to be widened, and its single carriageway will need to be converted into two carriageways. And it is not improbable that in the near future the roundabouts which occur where it crosses the Banbury and Woodstock Roads at Cutteslowe will need to be improved by the construction of two-level traffic crossings of some form or other.

In spite of the existence of the Hinksey Road, the line of the *Western By-pass* is a more open question. The *main* purpose of this by-pass must be to enable through-traffic on National Trunk Road No. 13 (A. 34) to avoid the city. If this were its *sole* purpose it could very well be argued that the road should go much farther out into the country, beyond the western hills, on a line running near Eynsham, Appleton, and Marcham. A road on that line may ultimately prove to

¹ Since this road must form part of the new Western By-pass, it will be referred to here as the Hinksey Road so as to avoid confusion with the new, and genuine, Southern By-pass which is suggested in this plan.

be necessary for the purposes of *trunk* traffic. But, in designing a city by-pass, the needs of all through-traffic must be considered; the various links that are intended to serve certain main purposes must serve other purposes as well, and they must all fit in to make a complete by-pass *system*. Thus this western by-pass, besides serving trunk-traffic between north-west and south, must also serve arterial traffic between north-west and south-east (i.e. Worcester and Birmingham to Henley, &c.) and between north-east and south and south-west (i.e. Northampton and Bedford to Southampton, and the west of England). And since, to attract traffic to it, the line of any by-pass must be as nearly convenient as the line of the road which is by-passed, then the line of the several-purposed western by-pass to Oxford must be much closer to the city than that of the possible trunk by-pass in the locality of Eynsham.

The deciding factor in determining this line (always provided that the convenience of trunk-traffic is not seriously jeopardized) is the necessity of getting an easy connexion with the Henley road.¹ The line of the Hinksey Road is the best line to give this connexion. It is, indeed, the only satisfactory line close to the city, in spite of its being compromised by the North Hinksey-Cumnor suburbs. The new Western By-pass must therefore incorporate this misnamed stretch of road. In broad outline, its general direction will be as follows. Taking off from the existing road at Gosford Farm, south-east of Kidlington, it will carry traffic from the Northampton Road (A. 43), the Bedford road (A. 421), and the Banbury-Birmingham road (A. 423) to cross and pick up traffic from Trunk Road No. 13 (London-Birmingham; Worcester: A. 34) immediately east of Yarnton, whence it will continue for a short distance south-westwards to join Trunk Road No. 10 (A. 40: London-Gloucester, &c.) at a clover-leaf or similarly organized junction. From this junction the road will run southwards between Wytham and Binsey (not interfering with either, and keeping away from floodland as far as possible) to where the Hinksey Road joins the Botley Road—where again a two-level crossing will need to be arranged. Thereafter the line will be that of the Hinksey Road as far as South Hinksey, at which point it will swing southwards to join the existing Trunk Road No. 13 at its junction with the Boars Hill Road at the north-west corner of Bagley Wood.

The Henley connexion will be made from somewhere near the southern end of the Hinksey Road. Either of two distinct lines may be taken. The line which has hitherto been intended runs obliquely across the river valley towards Littlemore. It is very unsatisfactory in two ways. The two-thirds-of-a-mile-long bridge, over the several arms of the river and the floodlands about them, will introduce an extremely harsh and artificial line into the landscape merely because it will have an obviously oblique crossing of the valley instead of a right-angular one. And that oblique line will entirely ignore the possibilities of giving a very necessary new connexion between the region to the south-west and the whole of the city east of Magdalen Bridge. It can, of course, be argued that it is not the function of a by-pass to provide new access to the place it is by-passing. And in ordinary conditions that may, perhaps, be generally true. But there is a very special condition here in that the width of the valley floodlands, and the expense of constructing roads over them, make it unlikely that more than one crossing will ever be

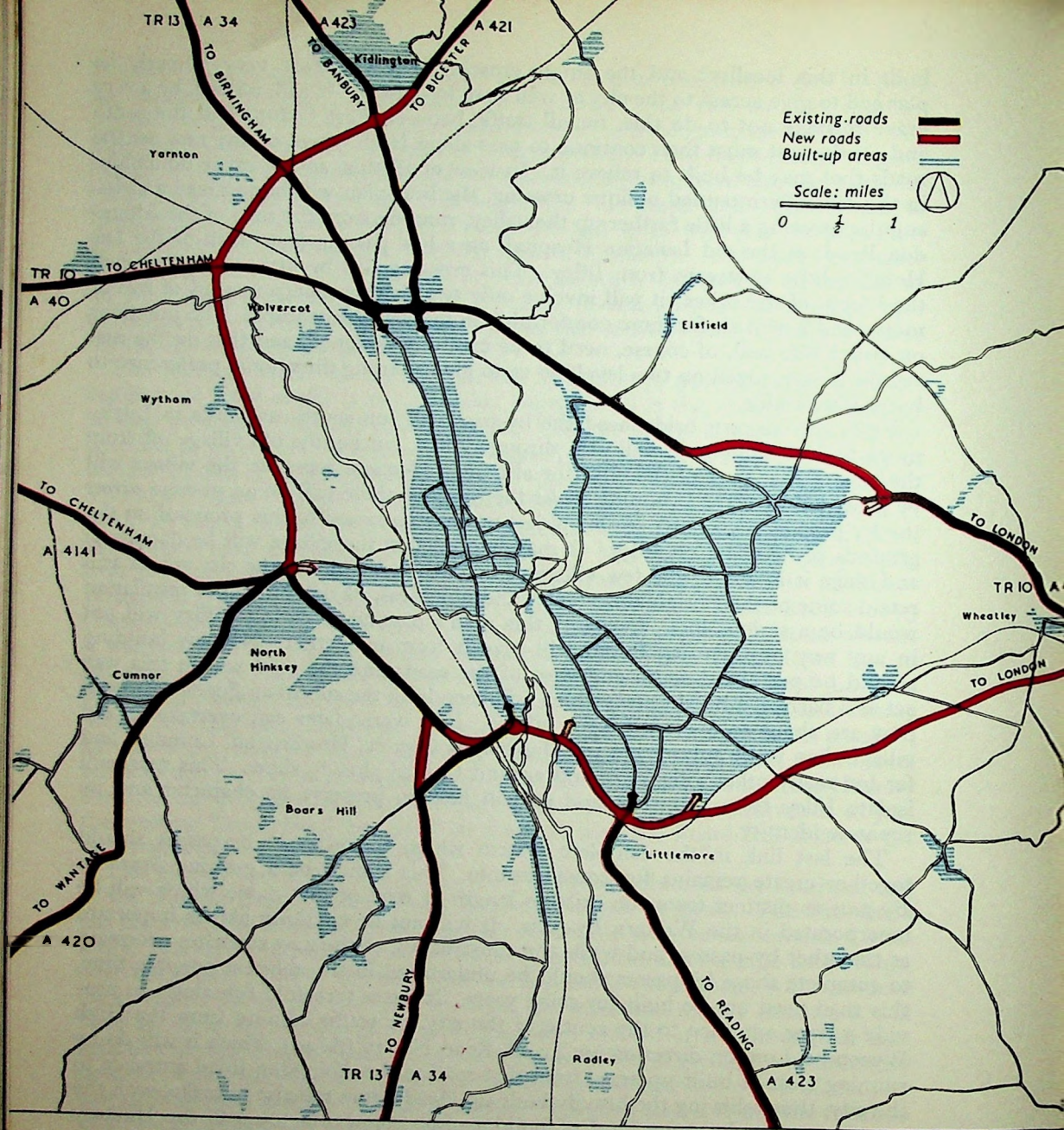
¹ This Henley connexion is as much a part of the Southern By-pass as of the Western: but it is more convenient to consider it here.

built in this locality: and the single crossing may therefore very properly be planned to give access to the city as well as to by-pass it. It will, indeed, be a very grave mistake not to do this, for all traffic between East Oxford and the south and south-west must then continue to pass along High Street or any new central roads that may be built to relieve it. In view of all this, and of other difficulties in the officially intended oblique crossing, the best plan will be to make a right-angular crossing a little farther up the valley, running from the turn of the Abingdon Road, at the old Isolation Hospital, on a line passing just north of the Isis Hotel, a little upstream from Iffley. This crossing will be little more than half the length of the other; it will involve only two river crossings instead of five or more; and it will sit far more comfortably in the valley landscape. The junctions on either side will, of course, need to be carefully designed, and that on the east should be organized on two levels so as to give a strong directional preference to by-passing traffic.

From this eastern bridgehead the by-pass will run south-eastwards to Littlemore, and in doing so it will pass through Iffley, cutting the old village off from the rest of that part of the city (for although adequate access to the village will be provided by a road running *under* the by-pass, there will be no passage *across* the by-pass at any point). Some objection may be raised to this proposal on the grounds of its effect on Iffley. It may be said that the village will be damaged; and since it is one of the few villages immediately adjoining the city which still retain some of their original character and quietness, its destruction or mutilation would be a serious loss. Certainly this road's passing so close to Iffley will not in any way improve it. But it will save it from extinction. No new building should be permitted south and west of the road: and the road will in this way act as a barrier, a breakwater, which will keep back the suburban floods that even now are about to overwhelm the village. Few worse fates can overtake an old village than to be submerged in suburbia, as Cowley, Headington, Cumnor, and far too many other villages in and around Oxford already show. This road will isolate Iffley from suburbia, and so will help to preserve its character and its separate identity.¹

The last link in the complete system which the external by-passes should together create remains for consideration. This should be a genuine *Southern By-pass* as distinct from the existing length of road of that name which will be incorporated in the Western By-pass. It will not be anything like as important as the other by-passes; and while the construction of the new stretches necessary to complete those by-passes should be undertaken in the shortest possible time, this road need not be built for some years. It has a threefold function—to provide a freer entrance to the centre of the city for traffic coming from the High Wycombe–London direction on Trunk Road No. 10 (A. 40), which it will do by running clear of built-up areas from that road to the Abingdon Road entrance to the city, thus relieving the heavily built-up Headington radials: to make, with the same purpose, the same kind of building-free connexion towards the Hinksey

¹ While these pages were in the press, a decision on this river-crossing was forced by the necessity of building houses at Iffley (Rose Hill): and the City Council decided *not* to accept this plan for coupling these two roads in a single crossing, even though it was made clear that the alternative was to build two bridges within a couple of hundred yards and cut the river valley up with roads. So it appears that the last chance of getting the essential cross-town connexion between Abingdon Road and Headington has almost certainly been lost.



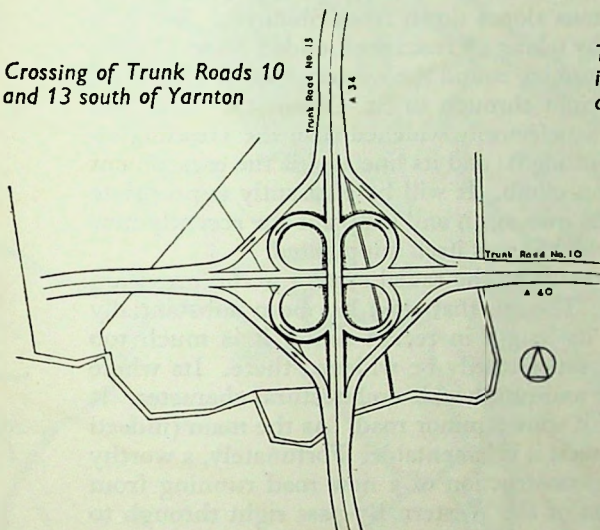
the proposed by-pass system

suburbs, Boars Hill, and other places on the west of the city: and to provide a more direct link between the trunk road and the industrial area and domestic quarters of Cowley. To serve all these purposes the best route for it is to take off from the trunk road south of Wheatley and run through the open country south of the Wycombe Branch Railway to join the Western By-pass at Littlemore.

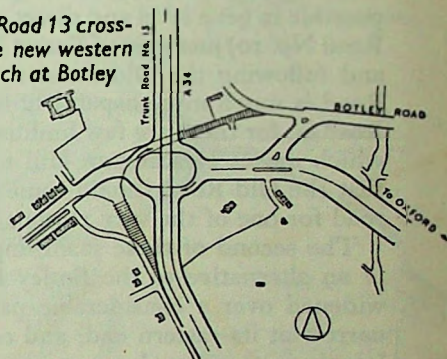
(c) Radials

In common with most old cities Oxford has a highly developed pattern of radial roads. In fact, every single one of its main roads is a radial: and they all centre on Carfax. They are all, of course, old country roads which have been engulfed

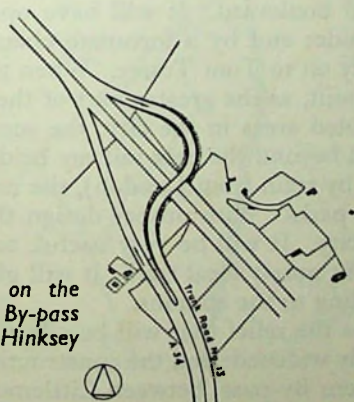
Crossing of Trunk Roads 10 and 13 south of Yarnton



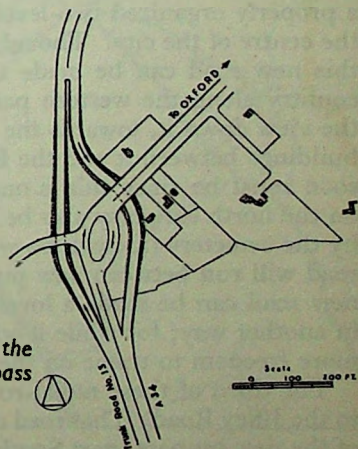
Trunk Road 13 crossing the new western approach at Botley



Junction on the Western By-pass at South Hinksey



Junction on the Western By-pass at Boars Hill



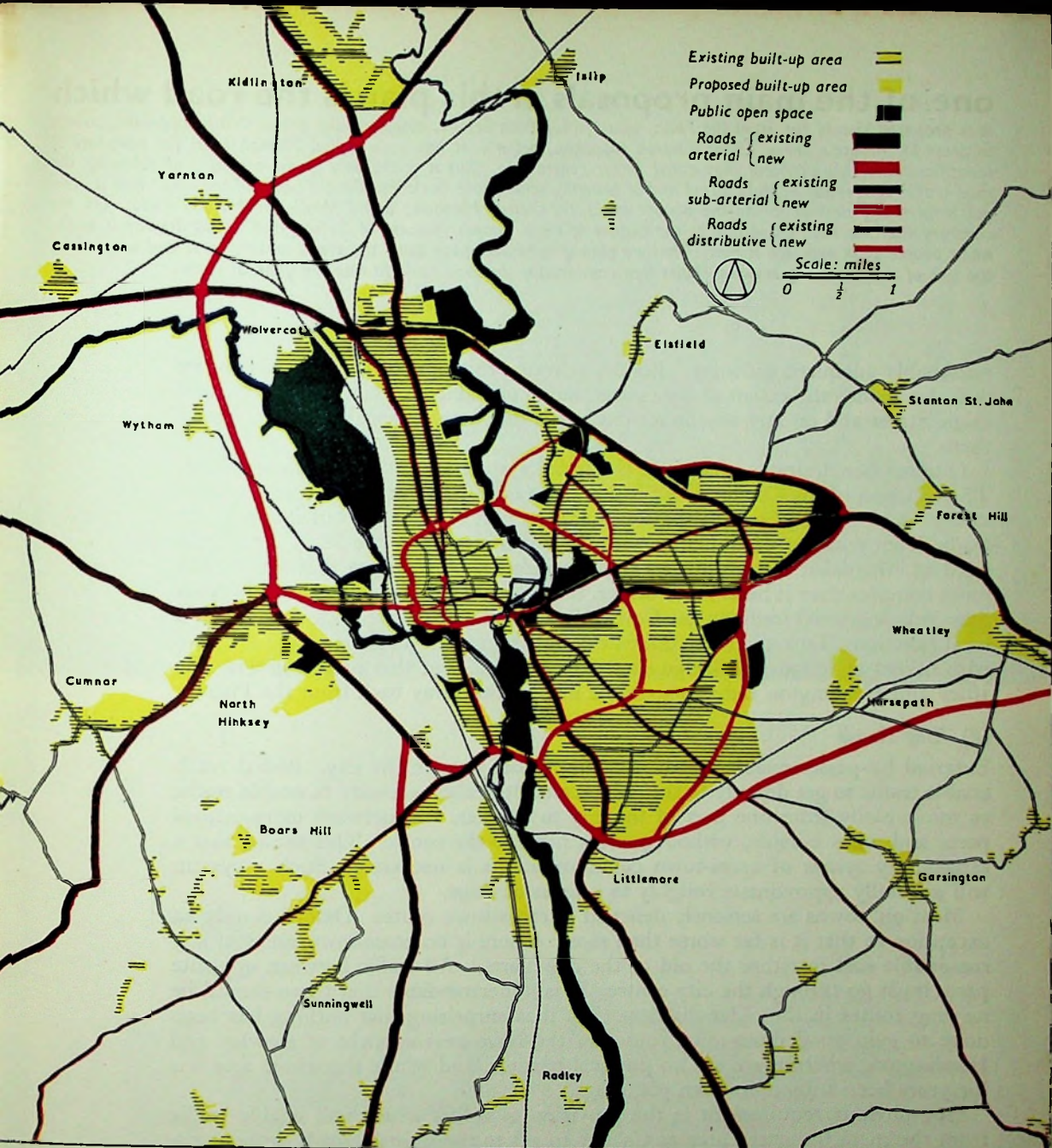
main road junctions

by the growing city. No planning was necessary to obtain them. If it had been they would not now be in existence. But, while their pattern is satisfactory, their widths for the most part are not; and the suburban building along them makes them all quite unworthy as entrances to one of the world's great cities. It is not now possible to find lines for new radials to relieve or supplant *all* these old ones. Opportunities for widening them will have to be taken as they occur. But three major alterations can and should be made.

First the present Headington Road can be supplemented, and to some degree supplanted (as it should be, for it is unsatisfactory that the main London road should be as lined with houses and shops as this is at its eastern end), by adapting to modern use the historic Old Road which was itself supplanted by the Headington Road in recent times. The Old Road was, of course, quite unsuitable for modern traffic because of the precipitous slopes down from Shotover. But it is possible to get a level and direct route by taking off from the London Road (Trunk Road No. 10) just west of Forest Hill, running round the western foot of Shotover, and following the Old Road thence right through to St. Clement's. The Old Road is much more capable of being satisfactorily widened than the Headington Road is, for there are few buildings fronting it: and its line avoids the escarpment which makes Headington Hill so stiff a climb. It will be pleasantly appropriate that the Old Road should come into its own again and supplant the recently new road for one of the very reasons for which it was itself supplanted.

The second of these main improvements to the radial system is the provision of an alternative to the Botley Road. Though that road has been substantially widened over a considerable part of its length in recent times, it is much too narrow at its eastern end, and cannot satisfactorily be widened there. Its whole length, in any case, has a most squalid and ramshackle architectural character. It would be a disgrace to the city even if it were a minor road. As the main (indeed the only) entrance to the city from the west it is lamentable. Fortunately, a worthy new entrance can be obtained by the construction of a new road running from a properly organized two-level junction of the Western By-pass right through to the centre of the city. Though only two hundred yards south of the present road, this new road can be made as a wide tree-lined boulevard. It will have open country along the western part of its southern side: and by a fortunate chance the view down it, towards the city, ranges directly on to Tom Tower. When the buildings between it and the Botley Road are rebuilt, as the greater part of them soon must be since this is one of the most blighted areas in the city, the scene on the north side may also be made decent. And beyond the new railway bridge by the cemetery (known too well to all travellers by train from London), the new road will run between new public buildings and parks. With proper design this new road can be made a lovely entrance to the city. It will be very useful, too, in another way; for while it will itself be free from purely local traffic it will give more freedom to traffic on the present roads leading to the stations.

The third of these radial-road improvements is the relief that will be afforded to the Iffley Road. That road cannot be adequately widened: and the construction of the new by-pass (part Southern and part Western By-pass) between Littlemore and the south end of the Abingdon Road will enable traffic to and from the Henley direction to leave or enter the central part of the city by way of the Abingdon Road, which, being free of building along most of its eastern side, is capable of



the proposed plan for the district

one of the main proposals in this plan is the road which

it is proposed should run from the Plain, east of Magdalen Bridge, alongside the Broad Walk (opposite, above) to cross St. Aldate's below Christ Church (opposite, below). It has been called Merton Mall for purposes of identification. This proposal may cause bitter controversy. But it is the only possible means of relieving the mad traffic congestion in High Street and of bringing some peace back into the old heart of the city. And it need not involve any destruction to the beauty of Christ Church Meadow, Broad Walk, or Merton Field. On the contrary the new road could add to the beauty of those famous features of Oxford and would display it to far more people than ever see it now. The two photographs over-page show the views looking east and west along the line of the road: the drawing shows how comfortably the road could fit into the general scene.

reasonably adequate widening. Besides relieving the Iffley Road, this new route will also reduce the extent of the concentration of traffic on Magdalen Bridge and High Street and on any new inner-city roads that may be constructed to relieve them.

One further desirable change in the radial system should be mentioned here. The function of the Cowley Road is that of a radial distributive road, not a radial artery: it is the backbone of the south-eastern part of the city, but it carries no traffic from outside. Its junction with the radial arteries at the Plain, i.e. at the head of Magdalen Bridge, makes the organization of traffic at that point even more complex than it need be. Further, the construction of the Southern By-pass may induce arterial traffic to use Cowley Road, and so interfere with its important local function. To avoid these difficulties, it is suggested that this road's junction with others at Magdalen Bridge should be blocked, and that junctions with the Iffley and Headington radials should be made a little way back from the Plain.

(d) Ring Roads

External by-passes enable non-city traffic to pass outside the city. Radial roads enable traffic to get directly to the city centre. It is also necessary to enable traffic to move easily from one part of the city to another, and between extra-central parts and areas outside, without passing through the centre. This means that a satisfactory *system* of cross-town communications is necessary. Such a system will generally approximate roughly to a series of rings.

Most old towns are seriously deficient in cross-town routes. Oxford is only an exception in that it is far worse than most. There is no cross-town route of any reasonable sort in either the old or the new parts.¹ All traffic between opposite parts must go through the city centre. It is understandable that there should be no ring routes in the older districts. But it is surprising that nothing has been done to gain good cross-town routes in the large new suburbs of Cowley and Headington, where there are no physical barriers, and where the whole area has for years been subject to town planning.

One obvious requirement is the provision of a link which will enable traffic from the main industrial area at Cowley to get to the by-pass roads without the necessity of going through the city centre, or indeed any part of the city at all, so far as that can be arranged. For industrial traffic going north, a new road approximately along the line of the Roman Road as far as Headington Quarry is

¹ There is *one* route, that between Headington and Cowley, by Windmill Road, the Slade, and Hollow Way; but it is very unsatisfactory and inadequate.







Above and below (left)
the view looking west
along the line of the
new Merton Mall.

Below (right) the view
looking east.





S. R. Dorman 1946

the new square which is proposed at the junction of

Merton Mall and St. Aldate's will give an improved setting to the buildings of Christ Church as well as make smooth the circulation of traffic at this important point in the road system. Though the colleges have their squares (in the many quads), there are none in the public parts of the city: and the contrast between their open shapes and the confined shapes of the streets will thus make the squares suggested in this plan valuable for architectural as well as traffic reasons.

necessary. Traffic wishing to go to the south-east will get on to the Southern By-pass by way of Cowley Road at Garsington Bridge: and that wishing to go south-west or west will be enabled to do so by a continuation of the new Roman Road towards Littlemore and thence by the Southern and Western By-passes.

The main middle ring will be made up of a number of local links arising out of a number of local requirements. A new road enabling traffic to get from North Oxford to the railway stations and to Botley Road and the western suburbs without going through the city centre is clearly necessary. The best line for this road is from Banbury Road by the north-west corner of University Parks, across Woodstock Road and Walton Street approximately on the line of Observatory Street, thence swinging south-west and south through Jericho, across the north-western corner of Worcester College grounds¹ to the new Station Square which will be described later.

A new road across the valley of the Cherwell between North Oxford and Marston, Headington, and Cowley is an equally clear necessity. This should be a continuation of the Stations-North Oxford road. The only place where one can get a satisfactory connexion here is along the northern edge of University Parks, for none of the existing streets between Banbury Road and the Cherwell is capable of being converted into a main road of the kind that is required for this purpose. Thus the new road will need to be *inside* the park, immediately alongside the belt of trees on its northern boundary.² Immediately east of the new bridge which it will be necessary to build over the Cherwell, a spur road should swing north-eastwards to give Marston its long-desired link with North Oxford (and also with the stations, and the west), while the main branch will swing south-eastwards up Headington Hill by an easy gradient to join the Headington Road at its junction with Gipsy Lane.

The desirability of a link between Headington and Cowley and Iffley has already been mentioned. Joined to the road just described, this would also provide

¹ The line of the road as shown on various maps in this report will need to be amended slightly to avoid interference with Worcester College cricket ground. Here it should pass along the line of the canal, which should be filled in.

² There will no doubt be some opposition to this proposal. But the road need in no way interfere with the ordinary use of the Parks, nor injure adjoining property, nor be in any way unpleasant in itself—it would, indeed, be a very pleasant road of the parkway type. In any case, the University authorities have long been nibbling substantial areas out of the Parks for building purposes, and something more like a bite than a nibble is about to be made along the Parks Road tri-frontage so as to accommodate new buildings on the Keble Road-Banbury Road-Parks Road tri-frontage. If such nibbles and bites can be made for private purposes, however important, they can angle. If such nibbles and bites can be made for public purposes (though this argument should not be taken to far more justifiably be made for public purposes (though this argument should not be taken to defend still further reduction in the size of the Parks): and, since no satisfactory alternative route is possible, the construction of this road on this line is certainly an important matter of public interest.

river crossings

suggested in various schemes

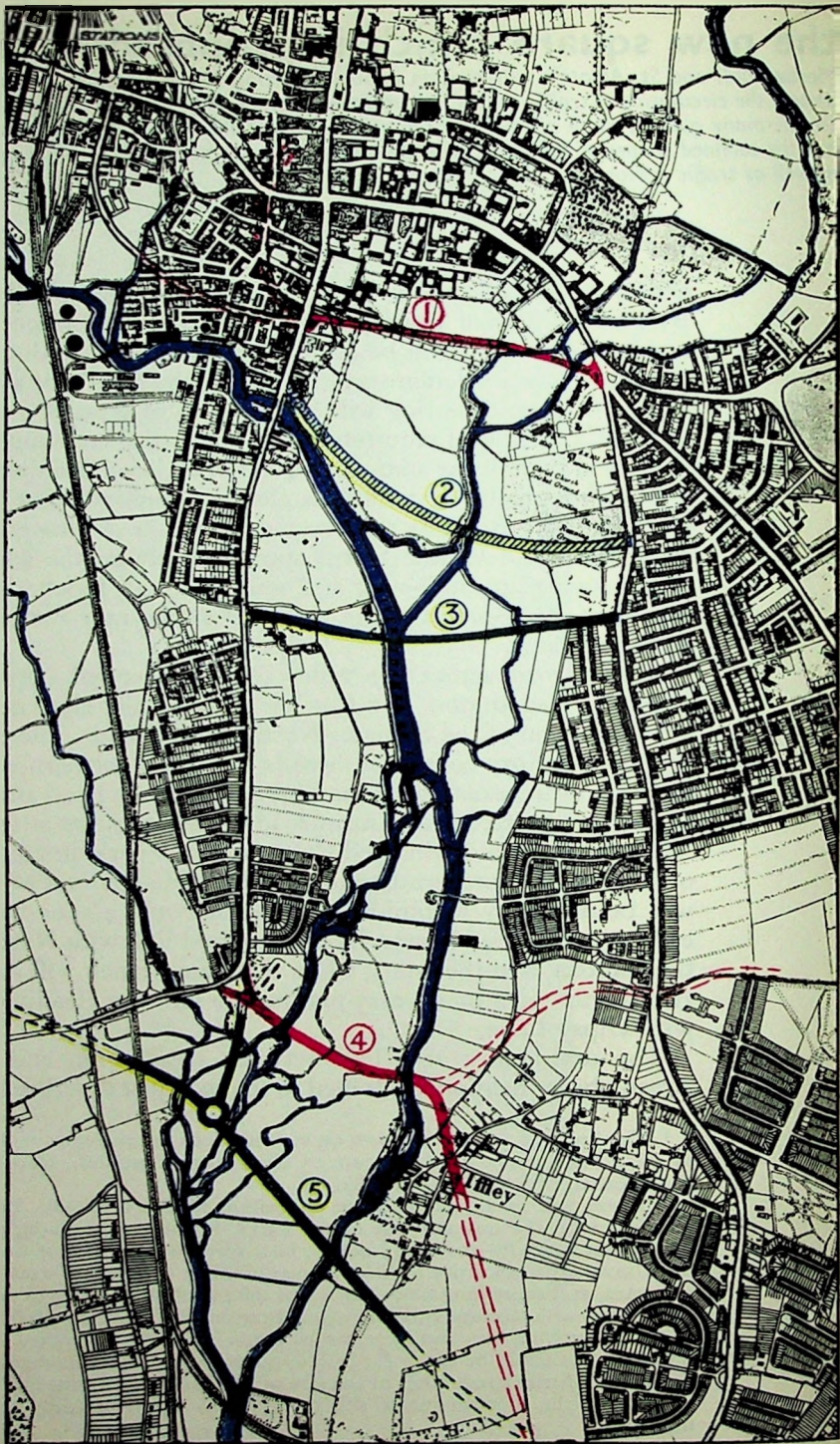
1. Crossing proposed in this plan

2. Crossing (Christ Church Mall) suggested by Mr. Lawrence Dale

3. Crossing proposed in city planning scheme

4. Crossing proposed in this plan

5. Crossing proposed in district planning scheme



a non-central route between North Oxford and the eastern parts of Cowley and beyond. It should run from Gipsy Lane, across what is now the Southfield Golf Course, to Cowley Marsh, and thence to the new crossing of the Thames at Iffley.

(e) *New Central Roads*

It has already been pointed out that the completion of a system of external by-passes, though that is in itself a most urgent and necessary undertaking, will only go a comparatively small way towards lessening traffic congestion in the city centre. The completion of the ring-road system will also help; but not, again, to any really decisive degree. By far the most urgent and necessary single step in the solution of the city's traffic problems lies therefore in the improvement of the road system in the very centre of the city. The core of the problem is not so much to enable traffic to avoid the city centre as to get into it and out of it and move about it easily and smoothly. And since the present central streets are so lined by valuable or costly buildings as to make satisfactory widening financially impossible, and since in any case such widening would destroy the historical character and scale of this part of the city, the only possible method of achieving satisfactory traffic movement in the centre is, by some means or other, to by-pass the present central streets. And, further, since the prime essential of any by-pass is that it should be as nearly convenient as the route which it is to supplant (or, better still, even more convenient), then the only way to by-pass the present central streets is by new streets *in the city centre itself*.

It is on this matter of equal convenience that certain proposals which have already been made fall down. The official planning scheme for the city contains a proposal to run a new road from Jackdaw Lane (by the University Football Ground adjoining the Iffley Road), across the Thames near where the New Cut joins it, to the Abingdon Road south of Grandpont. Such a road, being far out from the city centre, would be quite useless as a central by-pass. It would take a little local traffic between two quite small localities: but the small convenience afforded to that small traffic would be quite incommensurate with the damage to riverside amenities and the expenditure that would be involved in the great new bridge which would be necessary. This proposal has nothing to commend it and everything to condemn it. It should be dropped.

A more serious proposal is that for a 'Christ Church Mall' which Mr. Lawrence Dale has put forward in his book *Towards a Plan for Oxford City*. Mr. Dale has presented his case very attractively and wittily, and has done the city a considerable service in braving the controversy which was bound to result from any attempt to touch even the hem of the sacred Christ Church Meadow. But while Mr. Dale's road has been fiercely criticized in many quarters on account of its interference with beauty and peace (to say nothing of sentiment), it is chiefly on other grounds that it must fail. It must do so because it takes too circuitous a route. Even for traffic from Iffley Road it would not be attractive enough; for, besides taking off from that road at right angles, and so making obvious its deflexion from the objective that is seen clearly ahead, its distance to Carfax¹ is 400 yards longer than the present distance by High Street. The disadvantage for Cowley Road traffic is of the same considerable, though not entirely crippling, kind. But for traffic

¹ Mr. Dale defends his road as a by-pass towards the stations and makes no provision for a link northwards to relieve Cornmarket Street.

on the Old Headington Road and the Headington Road (both of them main entrances from London), and on the Marston Road, the disadvantages will be such as to stultify it. From the junction of those three roads at London Place the distance to Carfax will be nearly half as long again by 'Christ Church Mall' as it is by High Street.¹ And here it will be even more obvious to the traveller that by going along 'Christ Church Mall' he is going *away from* the centre of the city. These conditions will be fatal to the road's success. It is certain that little traffic from the Iffley and Cowley Roads will take 'Christ Church Mall', and none will from the other three roads. The road will have no great usefulness in relieving High Street and Carfax.

Both these roads on the south side of High Street will fail. There is another line for a road on the south, which will be entirely successful; but since a suggestion that this line should be taken is bound to raise bitter controversy, it is necessary to see if it is possible to provide a by-pass to High Street on the north side. A glance at a map will show that nothing is possible there. Longwall Street takes too sharp a turn away from High Street for traffic west of Carfax ever to be induced to go in a direction which is so clearly away from its objective. If a new gentler deflexion is taken, from the Plain, it will involve a severing of Magdalen Grove and other college grounds, the destruction of Holywell Street, and the use of Broad Street as a main traffic street. Any one of these things, taken individually, would be a major disaster: collectively they cannot be considered for a moment. And in any case a new road here would fail for the simple reason that, to by-pass High Street, traffic would be asked to pass by the very entrance to it at Magdalen Bridge; and traffic is not as easily fooled as that. No by-pass north of this line would in the least attract traffic to the stations and the west. So it comes to this. No inner by-pass north of High Street is possible. Neither of the two routes that have recently been under consideration to the south can be successful. A new line, and that south of High Street, must be found.

The only possible line, and one which is nearly perfect *so far as traffic considerations are concerned*, stands out as plain as a hundred pikestaffs. It is so plain that it is strange that it has not been suggested before now. Perhaps fear of powerful anger has intimidated anyone who has thought of it. But the route stands open for all to see; a direct line running alongside the Broad Walk between the Plain and the middle of St. Aldate's, and thence northwards and westwards: a line with all the quality of inevitability about it.

To distinguish this road from Mr. Dale's Christ Church Mall, and for purposes of identification, it may be as well to call it *Merton Mall* here. And so that there may be no misunderstanding about its purpose it will be as well to outline the whole of the new inner city traffic system which will here be proposed, before considering in detail the arguments for and against the Mall itself.

The way to solve the problem of traffic congestion in the city centre is so clear as to be beyond argument. East-west and north-south roads cross at Carfax. These roads cannot be widened, and sufficient space to organize the crossing-point cannot be obtained. A new set of east-west and north-south roads, with a properly organized point of crossing, must therefore be provided. And, remarkable as it may seem in so crowded a city, they *can* be provided without undue difficulty or

¹ From London Place to the stations the distance will be 3,300 yards by Mr. Dale's road as against 2,450 yards via the High Street route.

expense (see page 115). The new east-west route can run by *Merton Mall*, with a direct continuation across St. Aldate's and through the slums of St. Ebbe's (where it might be called *East Oxpens*).¹ The north-south route will be by new streets running west of Cornmarket Street and St. Aldate's, between Baker's Corner and a new square below Christ Church.²

In addition to these streets, two other new streets, namely, *Newgate*, which will be part of the new western approach, and a new street across Gloucester Green (*The Friary*), as well as the existing New Road, will play their important parts in carrying central city traffic: but essentially the solution of the traffic problem lies in the provision of a new cross of roads to relieve the old cross.

As has already been said, both distance and direction play an important part in determining whether new routes will attract traffic from old routes. As to distance, these new roads will not show any serious disadvantage against the old. From the Plain to the stations is about 1,950 yards by the High Street route: by the *Merton Mall*-New Road route it will be exactly the same: by the *Merton Mall*-Oxpens route it will be 2,100 yards. From the Plain to *New Carfax* by High Street is 1,300 yards: by *Merton Mall* it will be 1,400 yards. To Baker's Corner it is 1,400 yards via High Street, and via *Merton Mall* it will be 1,650 yards. Even where the distances are rather longer, the possibility of unimpeded movement will enable traffic to travel the greater distance in at least no longer and almost certainly much shorter time. And then there is the psychological effect of direction, and particularly of the directional emphasis which may be given at road junctions. None of these new streets is *obviously*, from the direction it takes, much longer than the route it is intended to relieve. And at most junctions the directional emphasis will be towards the new road, not the old. At the new roundabout which will be required at the Plain, for example, the turn into *Merton Mall* comes before the turn into High Street, and it will, of course, be so *for all traffic*, even for that arriving from the St. Clement's direction which is nearer to High Street than to the *Mall*. At the new roundabout at *Christ Church Square* the same kind of emphasis occurs, for the *New St. Ebbe's Street* turns out of the square before St. Aldate's is reached, and traffic from the east and from the south will thereby be induced to go towards the *New Carfax* rather than the old. And so in a number of other cases—though, of course, this condition is far oftener a piece of sheer good luck than of good management.

There is another means of inducing traffic to take new routes rather than old; and this, too, should be exploited to the full. The historical city east of Cornmarket Street and St. Aldate's is in any case so crowded with important buildings that there is no space available for the provision of car-stands there. If the new

¹ This and other suggested names are only for purposes of identification here, to save the repetition of cumbersome descriptions. The new names are italicized in the text to differentiate them from existing names.

² A more detailed description of these routes is as follows:

East-west: from the Plain by way of *Merton Mall*, across St. Aldate's at a square formed below Christ Church (*Christ Church Square*), through the St. Ebbe's district by way first of Speedwell Street (*East Oxpens*) to join existing Oxpens Road for part of its length, and thence by a new line to a square formed in front of the stations (*Station Square*).

North-south: from a new square formed at Baker's Corner (*George Square*), a new street between Cornmarket Street and New Inn Hall Street (*Frewin Street*) to join Queen Street at a new square (*New Carfax*) by the Baptist Church: then partly along the line of St. Ebbe's Street, swinging (as *New St. Ebbe's Street*) south-eastwards to connect with St. Aldate's and *Merton Mall* at *Christ Church Square*.

car-stands are deliberately situated so that they are most conveniently approached by way of the new roads, then much of the tourist and other traffic which intends to stay in the city centre for some time will be naturally drawn to the new roads, especially if it is suggestively directed thither by well-devised traffic signs.

In view of all this there can be little doubt that these new streets will offer sufficient convenience to attract *naturally* to themselves the greater part of the traffic which now congests the old streets. But to ensure their full use, even by the most obstinate of drivers, some legal restrictions may well be placed on the type of traffic which may use the existing streets. This will be an entirely proper proceeding if no serious inconvenience is involved and no undue hindrance is put on the city's carrying out its functions. Clearly private cars and tradesmen's vans must be allowed to move freely about the inner city. But lorries and other heavy vehicles which have no specific business have no natural right to be there; and the old restriction of 'no admittance except on business' can properly be put on them. Similarly citizens have a right to demand public transport to the principal parts of the city; and since High Street is some distance from *Merton Mall*, a bus service should continue to run there. But all that can be reasonably asked is *a* service, not *all* services; and it will be entirely proper if all buses now using the High Street are transferred to the *Mall*, and a single shuttle service is provided between the Plain and the stations. In Cornmarket Street and St. Aldate's buses may properly be banned altogether since the new north-south street is little more than a hundred yards away. All these restrictions would have to be regularized, of course: and what might be done in High Street, Queen Street, Cornmarket Street, and St. Aldate's is to impose restrictions of the kind that operate in the royal parks in London—no vehicle over two tons (except where specially authorized) and a maximum speed limit of, say, 20 miles per hour.

There is another and most important improvement which will result from the provision of these new roads. They will make quite unnecessary the use of Parks Road-Holywell Street-Longwall Street as a by-pass to Cornmarket Street and High Street. It has always been regrettable that these streets should be used for through-traffic—especially Holywell Street, that narrow domestic lane which is one of Oxford's especial architectural delights. With a far better by-pass route available in the new roads, these streets will return to their ancient quietness, and no through-traffic at all need penetrate the main University precinct at any point.¹

All this being the broad case for these new roads, the detailed siting of the various sections of road may now be considered. First to return to *Merton Mall*. The opinion has been ventured that this is the only situation in which a road intended to relieve High Street can be successful for traffic purposes. But in a city like Oxford the effect of any proposal on the amenities of the place is at least as important as its effect on convenience. What will be the effect of *Merton Mall* on the character of all this very special part of Oxford? The answer is the not unusual one that the effect will be both good and bad: and a decision can only be made when the balance of good and bad is weighed *in relation not only to the immediate locality of the Mall but to areas farther afield which will also be affected*.

¹ The discouragement of the use of these streets as a through-route will be made easier by the stopping-up of the northern part of Parks Road which is required for university purposes. Entry to this part of the university precinct will then be by Keble Road, whose right-angular junction with Banbury Road is sufficiently awkward to induce through-traffic to avoid it.

A bad effect must immediately be admitted. One of the pleasantest features of Oxford is the way the riverside open spaces come right into the heart of the city. The Thames-side landscape out from Christ Church is far from being the delight that it should be: but one most valuable quality it undeniably has—the quality of undisturbed quietness. Between Folly Bridge and the bridge at Abingdon, some nine miles away, no noise of traffic intrudes on the peace of the riverside. Here the 'sweet Thames' continues to 'run softly', as poets for some hundreds of years have described it as running. It cannot continue quite undisturbed. A new bridge must be built between the present crossings; and somewhere in the locality of Iffley is the place for it. But any further disturbance than that should be avoided. One of the most weighty arguments used against Mr. Dale's Christ Church Mall is that it would destroy the peace of the Eights Reach. Other crossings that have been proposed would be equally damaging. If there *must* be a new road south of High Street—as indeed there must—will it not be better to get it, and its inevitable noise, over once and for all as close in to the city as possible, and leave the rest of the river valley down to Iffley undisturbed?

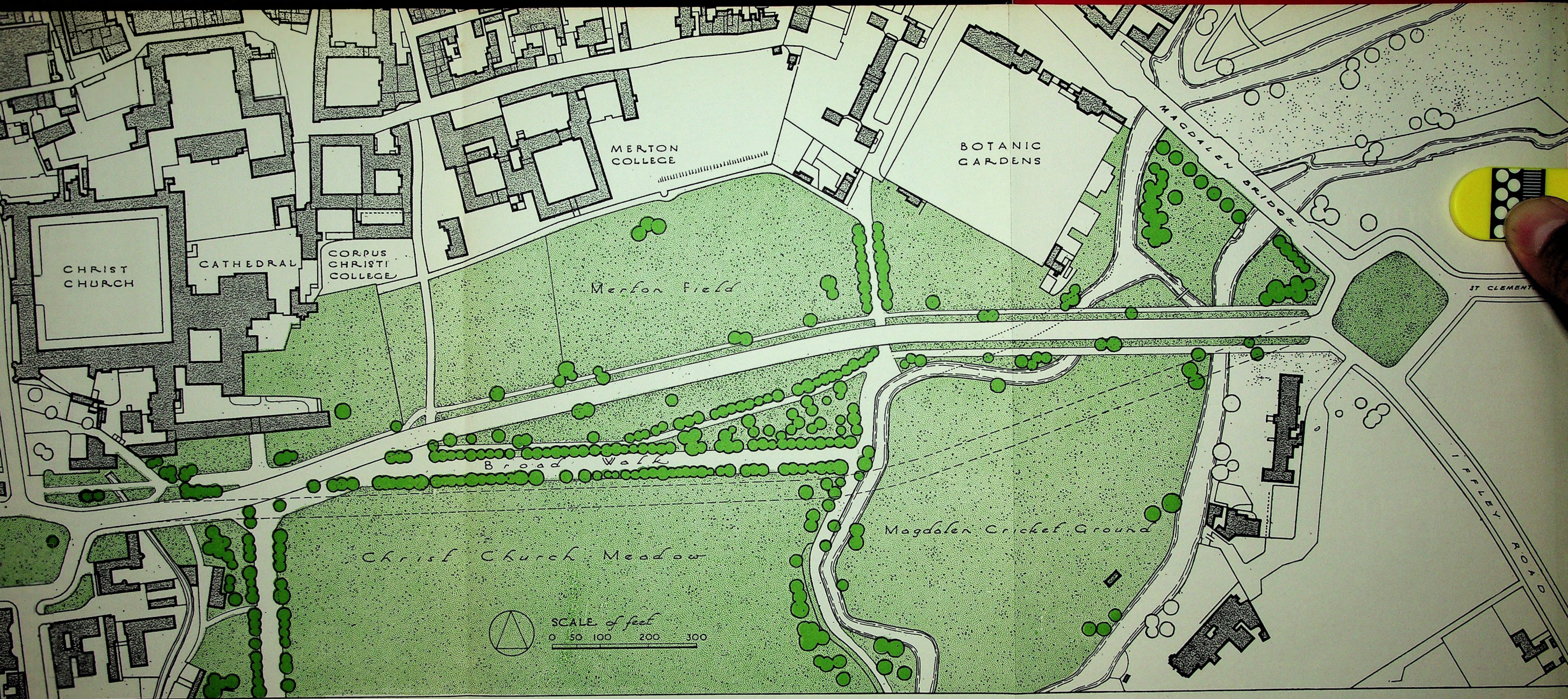
And there is another quietness to consider—the lost quietness of High Street. The construction of *Merton Mall* would give that tormented street quietness again—to say nothing of allowing its famous buildings to retain their stability. And if it is a matter of losing the peace of Broad Walk and Christ Church Meadow to gain quietness in High Street, it cannot be unreasonable to argue that the comfort and safety of the thousands of university people and the tens of thousands of citizens and others who daily use that street outweigh in importance the calm afforded to the handful of people who frequent the two paths between the city walls and the river.

To argue thus is not to dismiss too lightly a precious possession. The quietness of Broad Walk is a very lovely thing. If there were any possible way of avoiding its destruction, while at the same time solving the enormous traffic problem of the city, it should certainly be taken. But there is no other way. In face of difficulties like these in Oxford, some sacrifice must be made somewhere. It is a question of whether High Street shall continue in madder and more murderous congestion or whether the deep peace of one particular spot out of many such spots¹ shall remain. The sacrifice will have to be made, and the decision taken. There is no other way out.

The sacrifice is one of quietness only. The present beauty of the magnificent Broad Walk avenue will hardly be touched: and new beauty which will be created will amply compensate for the one or two trees that will be cut away near Meadow Buildings. The Memorial Garden at St. Aldate's will lose some small trees and a stretch of lawn. But in place of these losses there can be created one of the most beautiful roads in the world—as well as one of the most necessary.

Two alternative lines are possible. The beginning and the end are common to both, i.e. on the east a new square at the Plain (involving the demolition of the building occupied by Magdalen College School, which in any case is to be removed), and on the west a new *Christ Church Square*. In between, the road may pass either south or north of the Broad Walk. The southern line will entail the severance of the Magdalen School Cricket Ground, and in passing *between* the Broad Walk

¹ For there are *miles* of peace on the Cherwell, and the Thames itself will remain quiet: and there is peace, too, in college quads and elsewhere.



Merton Mall: a road to relieve High Street of its traffic.
An alternative line is shown dotted.

and Christ Church Meadow it will create more disruption than the line on the north. The northern line is much to be preferred, for though it will have a slightly awkward oblique crossing of the western end of the walk and will pass nearer to Meadow Buildings than the southern line, it will interfere hardly at all with the cricket ground, it will avoid the severance of the Walk from the meadow, and it will have a superb panorama of some of Oxford's noblest buildings. Travelling from east to west along it one will see, across a narrowed Merton Field, the fine stretch of city wall there, and the buildings of Merton, Corpus Christi, Christ Church, and the Cathedral, with glimpses of the Radcliffe Camera and the spires of All Saints' and St. Mary's beyond. In the opposite direction, instead of the Christ Church group, one will have Magdalen Tower crowning the view. This will be a most lovely roadside scene. With careful attention given to the details of the road itself there may be here displayed a marriage of landscape and architecture as perfect as any that exists anywhere in the world.

This, then, is the main link in the new system of roads which is suggested for the centre of the city. The other links are less controversial. Little need be said about *New St. Ebbe's Street*, *East Oxpens*, and *Neugate*. They pass through slum districts which are already scheduled for demolition and which have to be cleared and rebuilt as soon as labour and materials are available. The lines of *Frewin Street* and *The Friary* are rather more difficult. *Frewin Street* must take an oblique line between *New Carfax* and Baker's Corner, because the northwards continuation of the existing New Inn Hall Street is blocked beyond Beaumont Street by the Ashmolean and other important buildings in St. Giles: but it must do so chiefly because it is desirable that a new street here should connect with Broad Street, as this will do in *George Square*. This means that it must pass through two important buildings and one expensive one, namely, the University Union, Frewin Hall, and Messrs. Elliston and Cavell's departmental store. Frewin Hall is one of the best historical domestic buildings left in the city and its destruction will mean a regrettable loss: but there is no way of avoiding it if this undeniably necessary new street is to be made. Neither the University Union nor Elliston's shop will be missed as architecture, and the new sites which can be made available for them will suit their purposes far better than the present ones.

The formation of the new *George Square* on the site of Elliston's shop will make possible the construction of *The Friary* to relieve George Street, which is far too narrow to serve satisfactorily for the main western approach to this part of the city centre. Traffic considerations, particularly in relation to *George Square* (where roundabout circulation would be made impossible by a junction of two roads in one corner) will require the closing of both ends of George Street to traffic, though the middle part of the street may remain open to local traffic. This need not in the least impair the success of George Street as a shopping street. On the contrary, it may help it. And in the matter of cost it is worth noting that the driving through of the new *Frewin Street* and *The Friary* will together cost no more than would the widening of George Street,¹ and certainly far less than would the widening of Cornmarket Street, could that undertaking be contemplated.

¹ Chiefly because, though some large buildings will be demolished, the new streets will for the most part pass over open land in the grounds of Frewin Hall and the Union and the wilderness of Gloucester Green.

The smallness of the financial cost of obtaining all this system of new inner roads is indeed quite remarkable. More than two miles of indispensable new roads can be obtained at an almost trivial cost. For the most part the lines of these roads pass over open land or slum sites. Only two large buildings and a dozen or so smaller ones will need to be cleared in all those two miles—and this in or near the heart of one of the most congested and architecturally notable of all the smaller cities of the world. It is a fantastic piece of good fortune. And it is not merely that the financial cost of construction will be so small and the benefits in the relief of congestion so great. These new streets will make possible the extension, to more than twice its present size, of a shopping centre which has hitherto seemed strangled beyond all hope of release. They will open up noble sites for new public buildings in a city where hitherto even third-rate sites have been despaired of. And in doing so they will enrich the city *financially* as well as in other directions, for the site values which will be created by these new streets will be far greater than the cost of making them.

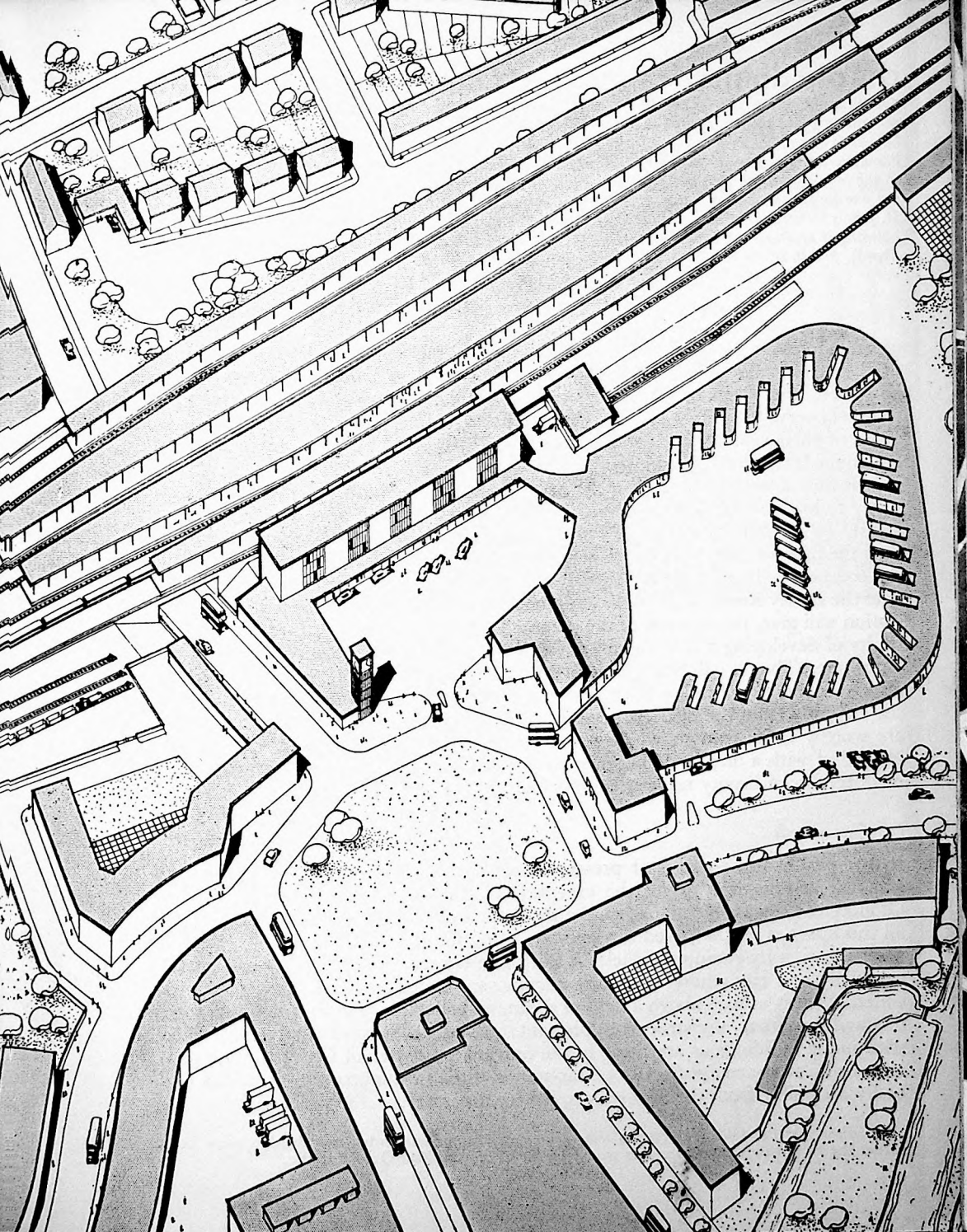
It has been frankly admitted that there will be two matters for regret in obtaining these two miles of new central roads—the loss of quiet in Christ Church Meadow and the loss of Frewin Hall. But it would surely be more than a little unreasonable to maintain that these two losses overbalance the immense public gain that the roads will bring to the city.

(f) *Transport Station*

As it is desirable to keep all buses (except a necessary shuttle service) off High Street, so it is desirable to keep to the minimum the number of buses using other central streets. City buses must, of course, pass over those streets: but there is no need for long-distance services to do so. The sensible arrangement is that services between the city and places beyond it should be kept just outside the central area, though not so far outside as to result in inconvenience through travellers having too far to walk. Further, since in a county town there is always a good deal of transference of traffic between bus and train, the main bus station should be near the main railway station.

The present bus station at Gloucester Green is not only a wretchedly untidy and ill-organized affair in itself: it is also badly situated. It is too close to the centre: all traffic to it must pass over the central streets, and it is inconveniently far from the railway station. The obvious position for the bus station in Oxford is immediately adjoining the railway station. Here it will be on the inner ring road and yet within a very short distance of the most central parts of the city.

It is likely that at last the deplorable railway stations will be rebuilt. Generations of citizens have demanded that they should be, and have argued about where they should be situated. Suggestions have been made that they should be sited down by the Old Waterworks or away at the southern end of Abingdon Road, a mile and a mile and a half distant from Carfax. Neither suggestion makes much sense. A railway station should be close to the city centre: and in any case these positions, though far from the centre, would require all traffic to pass over the



the old domestic streets of Oxford play a most important

part in creating the special architectural character of the city. And they are not so numerous that any of those remaining could be destroyed or mutilated without great loss to the whole. Holywell Street (opposite: above and below) is one of the best streets of its kind and size in England. There is unusually little Georgian and Regency domestic architecture for a city of Oxford's importance, and what there is occurs in small groups rather than in the whole quarters that one gets in similar towns. The three crescents of Park Town (over-page: left, above) are the largest formal grouping, and they are surprisingly late in date (c. 1850). Beaumont Street (p. 208) and St. John's Street are the only other formal streets. The rest of the eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century domestic building is scattered and small in extent, as in the little blocks in Woodstock Road (over-page: left, below: right, above), and in St. Clement's Street (over-page: right, below)

central streets to get to them.¹ So far as situation goes the present stations could not be better. The pity of it for so long has been that *as buildings* they could not be worse. But given new buildings and a careful planning of their approaches, they will serve the city well in their present position, especially if advantage is taken of their rebuilding to combine them with the new bus station to produce a genuine Transport Station.

It is now agreed between the two railway companies (and it will almost certainly follow on the nationalization of the railways) that the present two stations should be combined into one. The new joint station will be very much larger than the present stations put together, for instead of the two existing through-lines the companies intend to have six, and this will involve a very much wider bridge over the Botley Road. Besides the additional convenience which this joint enlarged station will give, the removal of the present L.M.S. Station will afford the opportunity of developing a well-organized traffic square and a well-planned bus station on its site. Thus it will be possible to get the desired Transport Station, standing off a spacious new Station Square, with roads articulated to it from all parts of the city, and from the districts beyond: and Oxford may at last have stations that are worthy of it: stations which will greet the traveller with promise of riches, instead of with a display of beggary, and which may send him on his way with recollections of beauty rather than of squalor.

(g) Car-stands

In the city centre there is at present officially recognized space for 1,050 cars standing at one time. With the exception of the wire-netted 'parking' area at Gloucester Green which looks so like the cattle market that it recently displaced, all this space is on the paved carriageways of public streets.

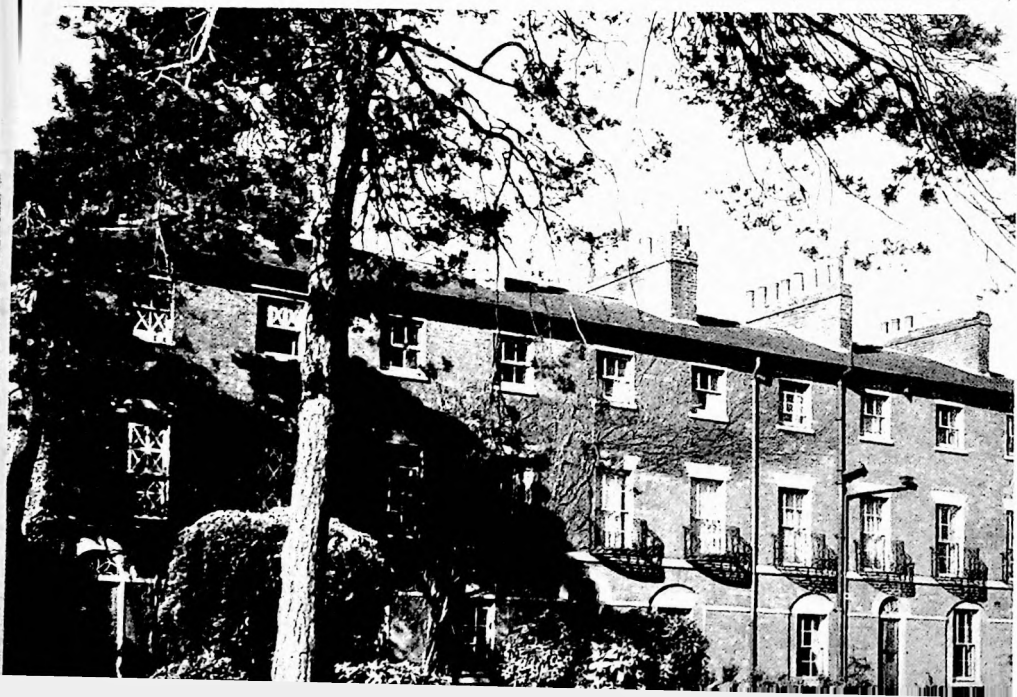
Occupation by standing vehicles is not the most serviceable use of road space, especially in a city where streets are narrow: and architecture is not best appreciated when it is seen above a base of gleaming cellulose. The intrusion of rows of standing cars in any street is unpleasant: it is particularly so in streets as lined with noble buildings as are those in the university quarter of Oxford. The provision of a well-arranged series of car-stands, sited in unobtrusive positions and easily accessible from the new streets, is very necessary.

¹ Unless, for the Old Waterworks site, a long new approach and a new bridge were built across the river valley: and even this would be useful only to East Oxford traffic.





Park Town (above) : Woodstock Road (below)





Woodstock Road (above); London Place (below).





the other Oxford, the Oxford of the slum districts, is

almost entirely unknown to the outside world, and is apt to be ignored and forgotten in many pleasanter quarters of the city itself. But in St. Ebbe's (opposite), and in Jericho, St. Clement's, and Botley Road, there are between 3,000 and 4,000 houses that are either actually slums or so outworn and badly blighted that they should be pulled down along with the slums.

There is no formula on which to base an estimate of the amount of publicly provided standing space required in any ordinary city, let alone in a city with as much visiting traffic as Oxford has. It is obvious that the present standing space for 1,050 cars is even now fully occupied at peak periods. When everyone who can afford a car is able to get it, this space will be grossly inadequate. And it is not merely a matter of providing for the needs of the *immediate* future: if most of the quarter west of Cornmarket-St. Aldate's is to be rebuilt, the needs of the next thirty or forty years, at least, must be provided for now. So it is a matter of providing an incalculable amount of space in an already congested city.

It is clear that nothing like sufficient public standing space can be provided at surface level—and in any case large standing-places are very dreary-looking affairs: while they aid convenience they certainly do not add beauty. This means that *some* space, at least, will need to be provided in buildings above-ground or underground. And, further, the desirability of occupying as little space as possible calls for the use of 'mechanical parking' in one or two places at least. Various systems of 'mechanical parking' are now being advocated: and though both the initial and the operating costs are likely to be heavy, this method seems to be the only way of meeting future needs.

With these considerations in mind, it is suggested that the main provision of public car-stands should be as follows:

Multi-storey building south of George Street	1,440 cars
Multi-storey building south of New Market	940 "
Surface and underground space at the new Assembly Halls	427 "
Surface space, St. Giles ¹	250 "
Surface space, new Station Square	100 "
Surface space behind the present School, Osney Lane	88 "
Surface space between Queen Street and Pembroke Street	75 "
Total	<u>3,320 cars</u>

The total public space thus provided should be sufficient for all foreseeable needs. Not all of it will be required immediately. But the spaces should certainly be provided as the rebuilding of the western part of the city centre advances. In addition to all this new space, the space for some 800 cars that is at present licensed for standing in various streets can be regarded as a reserve. And there should, of course, be *private* standing space provided in association with all the bigger public and commercial buildings. This provision should, indeed, be made a condition of any permission to build.

¹ The surface standing at St. Giles may eventually be unnecessary, but in the great width of this street it is much less objectionable than it is in the narrower streets.

§ 2. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

(a) *Railway*

Oxford has some importance as a railway junction, since six lines converge upon it. That should make it a good centre for rail travel. But it does not. For the most part the services on those six lines are deplorable. There are a number of fast trains a day to London, and if one is careful to select those trains it is possible to do the 60-odd miles in an hour and ten or twenty minutes: the not-so-fast trains may take two and a half hours. There are also one or two fast trains to Birmingham and Bristol. But to anywhere else the train service seems to have been designed with the intention of encouraging cycling. Cross-country journeys are quite wretched. Instead of being a good rail centre, Oxford is one of the most difficult places in the country to get into and out of with comfort and expedition. That might be a good thing if the sole purpose of the train service were to keep Oxford from growing any bigger, but it is a good deal less than satisfactory for the 100,000 people who already live there.

With the exception of the rebuilding of the stations and the development of goods yards, no extensive railway constructional work is likely to be undertaken in the future. Suggestions have been made from time to time that the single-track line to Princes Risborough should be doubled, and that an improved service to London might be developed in this direction. The railway company maintains that this is too costly and difficult an undertaking to justify its being done. If this is indeed so, even under national ownership, all that can be hoped for is a better service on the present lines.

One improvement may be effected by the city itself. Hitherto all goods transport between the stations and various parts of the city, except Botley Road, has had to pass over the central streets. The construction of the inner ring roads will obviate this.

(b) *River and Canal*

The Thames is navigable by barge as far as Oxford: and the Oxford Canal (which is connected to the Thames near Wolvercote and at Isis Lock, near the centre of the city) links the city with Coventry by way of Banbury and Rugby, and has connexions with the Grand Union Canal, and so with Birmingham and London. Neither waterway carries much commercial traffic now. The canal chiefly carries coal, and some gas-tar, timber, and road material; and the river barges bring up a little timber from London. It is highly unlikely that commercial water transport will develop (it is more likely to decline out of existence) or that any new works will be undertaken on account of it.

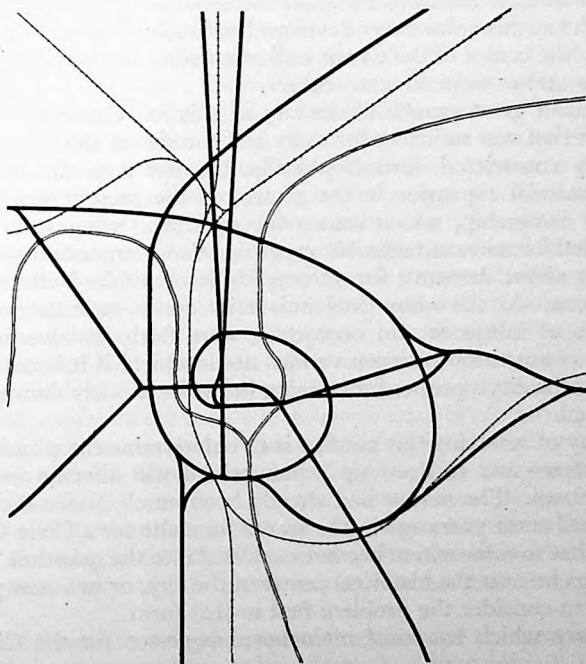
On the other hand, both waterways have potentialities for pleasure traffic. The Thames is, of course, used in this way at present, for a summer service of small steamers plies between Kingston and Oxford, a distance of some 90 miles, and boats and punts can travel well up the river. This use might be much extended. And the use of canals for holiday travel would offer many pleasures, though it is doubtful whether their maintenance for this purpose alone would be economical.

(c) *Airport*

The city airport, at Kidlington, some six miles from Carfax, is both well situated

and capable of adaptation to meet all likely future demands. There seems to be no need, so far as future developments of air transport are predictable, to plan any further provisions in this direction. But if plans for the airport itself are reasonably satisfactory, there seem to be no plans at all for the air-*routes* to and from it. The war years in Oxford showed how a city can be made almost uninhabitable by noise. What with the pounding of the vehicles of war through the streets and the roar of aeroplanes overhead, the centre of the city sounded like a dream of hell. The diversion of the less noisy vehicles of peace from the central streets will only go half-way to bringing quietness back. The diversion of aeroplanes from the sky above is also necessary. Authority should be obtained to ban all flying immediately over the city.

Schematic diagram of the proposed road system



5

THE INNER CITY

§ 1. PROBLEMS OF REDEVELOPMENT

The division of historical Oxford between its main functions of learning and living was for long established to the reasonable satisfaction of both. The chief university district has been east of Cornmarket Street and Carfax; the chief commercial district in Cornmarket Street and west of it. There has been some intermingling on the border. The western end of High Street is commercial; and there is a scattering of shops even at the eastern end. In Turl Street and Broad Street shops and offices elbow college buildings. There are one or two colleges west of Carfax. But nowhere, until quite recently, has there been any serious conflict between these functions in their demands for space for expansion. And, in any case, such incipient conflict as there was never developed seriously since the colleges are great land-owners in the centre of the city as well as outside, and so were in a dominant position in this matter as in so many others.

Since the recent great growth of the city all this has changed. The old commercial district that was sufficient for a city half the size of the present one is now catastrophically constricted—catastrophically, because it is the impossibility of adequate commercial expansion in the centre, on the present street pattern and under present ownership, which causes the strangling congestion there.¹ And growth has called for more unrealizable expansion than commerce alone has needed. It has brought about demands for various kinds of public buildings and other public provisions. At the same time university needs have increased. Where, before, spheres of influence and occupancy were fairly satisfactorily balanced, there is now a competition between various needs which, if it is not resolved, will not only impair the city's proper functioning but will seriously damage its physical character as well.

The only way of resolving this conflict is to redetermine the physical spheres of the main functions and to draw up a plan which will allocate definite sites to particular purposes. The matter had already been much under discussion when it came to a head some years ago in the search for a site for a Civic Centre. Since the discussion has to some extent become canalized into the question 'Shall the new public buildings be near the historical centre of the city, or in a new place?' it may be convenient to consider the problem first in that form.

The new place which has most often been suggested for the Civic Centre is

¹ And that has caused a fantastic appreciation of site values. Land values in the centre of Oxford are far higher than in any town of comparable size in Great Britain. But even on the outskirts of the city, land which was worth £30 an acre for agricultural purposes has cost £1,000 an acre for working-class housing.

in the St. Clement's district, beyond the Plain. Those who have most strongly advocated this locality have had as their main object the removal of congestion in the old centre by the creation of a new centre elsewhere: and if the establishment of a new centre could be used to make East Oxford more self-sufficient (so that there might then be twin cities—Oxford and Cowley—on opposite sides of the Cherwell), then their removal would serve a double purpose. The Samuel Committee of the Oxford Preservation Trust¹ had this in mind when it expressed itself strongly in favour of this proposal. The Committee's second report sums up the arguments for removal thus:

'East of the Cherwell is now a great new town, with a population as large as that of the whole of Oxford at the beginning of the present century. The first task must be to provide it with the status and amenities that its present importance demands. This connects at once with the proposal for a new Civic Centre. . . . Viewing the map of Oxford as a whole, this point (St. Clement's) may be seen to be already the geographical centre of the town; and since further development seems likely to be predominantly on the eastern side—although it is always dangerous to prophesy on such matters—to move the Civic Centre across the Cherwell will probably be more fully justified in years to come.'

These and similar arguments had previously been regarded as sufficiently substantial for the City Council's Town Planning Committee to suggest (in a report which was received without comment by the Council in June 1941) that the establishment of a new Civic Centre east of Magdalen Bridge was a possibility that 'should be taken into consideration' in any redevelopment of the city.

The opinion has already been expressed (see Chapter 2, p. 81) that the conception of Oxford as 'twin cities', if natural and not Siamese twins are intended, is unsound as a basis for future planning. Some of the reasons for this opinion are elaborated later in this chapter in a consideration of the extension of the central shopping district: but a sufficient argument against the eastward removal of the civic buildings for the purpose of avoiding central congestion can be advanced here by pointing out that, if the buildings are on the east, the half of the population west of Magdalen Bridge will have to pass through the central area in exactly the same way as those east of the bridge have now to travel to buildings on the west: and indeed many more will have to do so as long as the chief business district and the bus and railway stations remain on the west. Further, a proposal so serious as to remove the public buildings of the city from a locality in which they have been situated for hundreds of years, mainly for the purpose of avoiding traffic congestion (even if removal would effect that, which it will not), is an unwarrantably severe and risky experiment, unless it can be shown that there is no other way of avoiding congestion. But there *is* another way: and that way is the proper way, i.e. by providing new roads. The roads which have already been suggested in this plan will get rid of central congestion. So the argument on that score falls down. And the argument that the historical centre of the city should be denuded to give a fillip to an unsatisfactory suburb cannot be regarded as other than dubious, to say the least.

There is little doubt that these proposals originate in the proposition that the historical city belongs to the University. Even the Corporation's Town Planning Committee seems to have fallen into that error when, in the report which has

¹ Appointed by the Trust in 1940, under the chairmanship of Lord Samuel, to report on the planning and reconstruction of Oxford city and region: 1st report 1941: 2nd report 1942.

the quality of buildings

*Buildings listed as Ancient Monuments (pre 1714)
in red: other buildings of architectural value in
blue. Slum and blighted areas, hatched red: out-
worn areas, stippled red.*

already been quoted, it set out, as the first of its suggested points for consideration, the principle that 'the University is the predominant interest in the area extending from the Railway Station to Magdalen Bridge and from Folly Bridge to the University Parks, and any planning or development scheme should aim at preserving this area . . . in such a manner as not to increase the present proportion of commercial buildings'. That is a strange abrogation of a city's rights in its own place. It almost sounds like the final capitulation of town to gown. And it is, surely, utterly wrong. The University has practically no buildings at all west of the Cornmarket Street-St. Aldate's line, and this western district of the centre comprises half the total area between the stations and Magdalen Bridge. It cannot even be maintained that the University has not sufficient room for expansion outside this area; for, as will be shown later, there is ample room to the north-west of the city centre: and if some of the competitors for sites in the centre must go east of the Cherwell, there is nothing to stop the University itself from going there, especially since St. Hilda's College already gives it a footing in that locality. As a mere matter of occupancy of space, the suggestion that the University is 'the predominant interest' in the historical city is inaccurate and dangerously unsound.

The University of Oxford is a great and important institution. But so is the city of Oxford. And the area immediately north, south, and west of Carfax (to say nothing of considerable parts of the area on the east) is as indispensable to the city's life as the area to the east of Carfax is to the University's. And not merely to the city's life, but to the life of a wide region round about. Moreover, it is not true to say (as the Samuel Committee says) that St. Clement's is now the geographical centre of the city. It may be the spatial centre: but geography is not a matter of mere space: it is a matter of what happens to and in a space. A geographical centre is a crossing and meeting of lines of communication: a nodal point. That is what St. Clement's can never be, even though three roads come together there. It is a bridgehead: an important point in the city's geography, but not the centre of it. Carfax and the area about it are the centre of the city and the region because the city and the regional road systems centre there, and because the railway station, which is also a nodal point in communications, is near by.

To attempt to remove the centre of an historical city to another place would be a most drastic and dangerous piece of civic surgery. It is the kind of surgery which any sensible planner would try to avoid, even if there was a crying need for it. In Oxford there is absolutely no need. The suggestion that it should be done can only arise from a megalomaniac view of the University. And it would not profit the University in the least. It is proper that in deciding the future of the city high regard must be given to the University's needs. But that is a different matter from *sacrificing* the city centre to the University—and the sacrifice of the centre would be the sacrifice of the essential part of the citizens' and the countrymen's city.



Again let it be repeated, there is no need for anything of the kind. Proper planning can assure sufficient space for the extension both of the administrative-commercial centre of the city and of the University. It can overcome traffic congestion. A plan for redevelopment should therefore provide for the extension of the city centre where it has always been. It should also provide for the city's own public buildings being situated in and about that centre.

§ 2. THE UNIVERSITY

It has already been pointed out that no one knows some of the most elementary facts about the University as it is at present. No one seems to know anything, either, about what the University is going to be in the future. And not the University only as a corporate body. No one knows the plans of the individual colleges. Not even the individual colleges themselves. A number of attempts have been made to try to find out what the University and the colleges need in the way of new buildings and additional space for various purposes, so that proposals could be made in this plan which might bring about a proper relationship of the collegiate and the non-collegiate parts of the city. No information, except as to some immediate comparatively small intentions, has been forthcoming. This has not been due to any unwillingness of the University and the colleges to collaborate. They are most anxious to collaborate. They just do not know. It is partly that the future size of the University is still unsettled, for while the Government has properly asked the newer universities to expand greatly, indeed in some cases to something like two or three times their present size, it is felt by many people that Oxford provides an individual form of education which would be seriously endangered by sudden expansion on anything like that scale—all of which is a matter of such far-reaching importance that grave consideration must be given to it before any decision is arrived at. But the difficulty is also, in a large part, due to the fact that no full consideration has been given even to the requirements of the University and the colleges *at their present size*. Everyone knows that large new university buildings are necessary. Everyone knows that every single one of the twenty-eight colleges, now that the system of licensed lodgings has collapsed, must consider how it can house the undergraduates who ordinarily would live out of college in their third year. But no one knows how these things should be done or has drawn up any plans for them. How are those colleges which are hemmed in on all sides going to acquire new buildings? What use is going to be made of the great Wytham estate which has come into the University's possession? No one knows. The one plain fact is that neither the University collectively nor the colleges individually have any long-term plans of any kind. It seems incredible that it should be so—especially in face of the sorry evidence that South Parks Road provides of the disorder (to speak only of the architectural aspects of the matter) which results from such lack of forethought. But so it is. There are no plans.

What is the City Council to do in face of this? It is charged with the planning of Oxford's future. And here is this famous and powerful institution not only in no way able to assist the city in its planning, but unable to assist itself. It is a perfect illustration of the old way of drifting into individual day-to-day decisions which has brought Oxford so near to disaster in the last thirty years. And still it goes on. Even though it is recognized that the drawing up of plans will be a difficult matter, the University and the colleges should be required to produce at

an early date a responsible statement of their needs and intentions over the next few decades at least, so that the satisfaction of these in terms of buildings and space, in proper relation to the rest of the city, may be arranged within the general plan for Oxford as a whole.

The same need applies to another activity: one that is closely associated with the University. It is clear that Oxford is likely to become one of the great medical research centres of the world. Already there have been numerous developments towards this. And again there is no long-term plan. There is a strong tendency for this activity to centre on Headington. Various hospitals and other allied institutions have been built there during recent years. This may or may not be right. But the location of these institutions should not be left to mere tendencies, any more than should that of university establishments. Here again it is essential that a programme of long-term needs should be worked out so that the development of this activity may proceed in proper relation to the rest of the city's activities. It is most highly unsatisfactory that a plan for Oxford should be prepared (and it is everywhere recognized that it *must* be prepared) in the absence of vital considerations of this sort. The University has often enough in these last decades deplored the unplanned growth of industry in the city. It is even now being guilty of precisely the same fault itself.

Meanwhile, even though nothing can be done to allocate particular sites to particular purposes, an attempt must be made to determine the main zone of university expansion. Here, of course, everything depends on whether the idea of gradually moving out large parts (and perhaps even the whole) of the University to Wytham, which was at one time much discussed, is likely to be proceeded with. But since, in the absence of any declared policy, something must be assumed, the most likely assumption is that this will not happen. A removal of this kind would almost certainly be fatal to that special kind of education which Oxford boasts of providing—an education in living as well as in learning. For the *city* of Oxford is as much a means of this education as the *university* of Oxford: and a removal of university buildings to a hill-side beyond the city, however beautiful that hill-side may be, would produce a university as suburban as Birmingham's. It may reasonably be assumed, then, that the main university buildings and colleges will remain in the centre of the city.

A number of university establishments and several institutions affiliated to the University are situated on the western side of St. Giles. Worcester and Somerville Colleges and the Radcliffe are there too. Most of the domestic quarters in this locality, including St. John's Street, Wellington Square, Walton Street, and the streets west of it (comprising the eastern edge of Jericho) are outworn and must soon be pulled down.¹ Walton Street itself may very well be, and indeed should be, diverted westwards in the redevelopment of all this area which must take place in the next few years. These sites, then, will be available as soon as the housing situation permits their clearance. The district is admirably situated for university extension and is contiguous to the existing university concentration. So it is suggested that the main expansion should take place here, westward of St. Giles and Woodstock Road as far as the northern boundary of the Radcliffe Infirmary.

This main university building zone as a whole is shown on the diagram on

¹ St. John's Street, though it has architectural character, is not of sufficient interest to merit its preservation on architectural grounds alone.

the proposed central redevelopment

very heart of university Oxford and not on the wrong, the commercial, side of Cornmarket Street as the present site is.

§ 3. PUBLIC BUILDINGS

The present public buildings in the city are almost all inadequate or out of date. Among new buildings which are required are—a Town Hall (Municipal Offices), Public Assembly Halls, Library, Art Gallery, City Museum, Health and Social Welfare Centres, Municipal College for technical and other education,¹ County Council Offices, Law Courts, and a number of others.

In the siting of these buildings the same difficulties and dangers will occur as those which have just been discussed in connexion with university extensions. Their possible situation, and the possibility of their being grouped into one large monumental Civic Centre, has been a matter of controversy for a decade and more: but the consensus of opinion now seems to be that a Civic Centre is desirable. The Samuel Committee, for example, in its report on the planning and reconstruction of the city which has already been quoted, included a proposal for this among its recommendations, stating it in the following terms:

'A town is not properly equipped unless it has a Civic Centre, housing in one building or group of buildings . . . all the departments of the municipality (here followed a list of eleven buildings of various kinds). If Oxford possessed such a group of buildings, and if they were well planned and well designed, marked by dignity and grace, they might represent a twentieth-century addition to Oxford not unworthy of the contributions of the centuries that have gone before. It is essential for such a scheme that the site should be spacious enough. Our English towns offer too many examples of fine architectural opportunities lost by niggardliness in the siting. Modern Cardiff shows the right way.'

But if the analysis of Oxford's architectural character which has been set out in previous pages² is even approximately correct, the proposal to establish a vast Civic Centre of this kind is profoundly mistaken—as are the arguments supporting it. The conception is indeed a bad one for any town. It is, of course, an entirely modern conception. It was first developed some decades ago in the United States of America (where in architecturally impoverished and disordered cities there may have been some excuse for it). Since then it has spread to this country, and has become widely accepted. Several English cities have already developed ambitious and monumental Civic Centres, and many more plan to do so. The great groups that already exist (including the earliest and best British example, that at Cardiff, which is recommended by the Samuel Committee and which is indeed far more than a mere *Civic* Centre since it includes university and government buildings) are a sufficient indication of the dubious nature of the conception to encourage a reconsideration of the whole matter.

Clearly there is everything to be said for the grouping of buildings which have an association of purpose, and between which there must necessarily be some

¹ This is not strictly a public building in the limited sense, but it will be convenient to consider it here.

² See also Tailpiece, pp. 190 ff.



On this plan, and that facing p. 140, existing buildings are shown in grey: new buildings are in red, the brighter red showing public buildings

coming and going. Thus most of the departmental offices and committee rooms of the municipality, or of the County Council, should be in one building. Thus the library and the art gallery may be situated near each other. But there are not many others that must be together for functional reasons. Indeed there are some which should not be. The not-unusual inclusion of a fire station in a Civic Centre is an extreme indication of the desire for monumentality gone mad; for not only is it unlikely that anyone will couple the calling out of the fire brigade with a visit to the art gallery or to the municipal offices to pay his rates, there is, besides, the actual disadvantage that the movements of fire engines are not generally consistent with that 'dignity and grace' which, as the Samuel Committee suggested, a Civic Centre should contain. These, and other considerations like them, do not suggest even the merely functional desirability of monumental concentration. And as for the architectural considerations, it is not merely a matter of monumentality in this degree being out of character with any ordinary English town, let alone with a special city like Oxford; it is also a matter of the architectural impoverishment of the rest of the town which must result when all the biggest buildings are put in one place. So on all grounds the building of great Civic Centres should be discouraged everywhere. And in Oxford especially it should be avoided like the plague which it is. The ideal arrangement of public buildings is one which places them either singly or in small related groups at salient and suitable points about the centre of the city.

With these important principles of design in mind, suggestions may now be made for the siting of some of the chief public buildings that are required in Oxford. Even with the new building areas which will be provided by the demolition of outworn property and the construction of the new roads here suggested, it will not be easy to find satisfactory sites for all the new buildings that are required. The fewness of suitable and available sites will mean that a number of very large buildings will have to be situated in the same locality. But that does not mean that they must be associated in a monumental way. The chief difficulty indeed will be of another kind. It will be in the maintenance of a proper scale.

Whatever may be the range in the hierarchy of buildings favoured by different people, there can be no doubt that the TOWN HALL AND MUNICIPAL OFFICES should be accorded one of the most important sites in any city. It is a city's own building in a very special sense, and as such it demands a position of some (though not necessarily of very great) dominance.

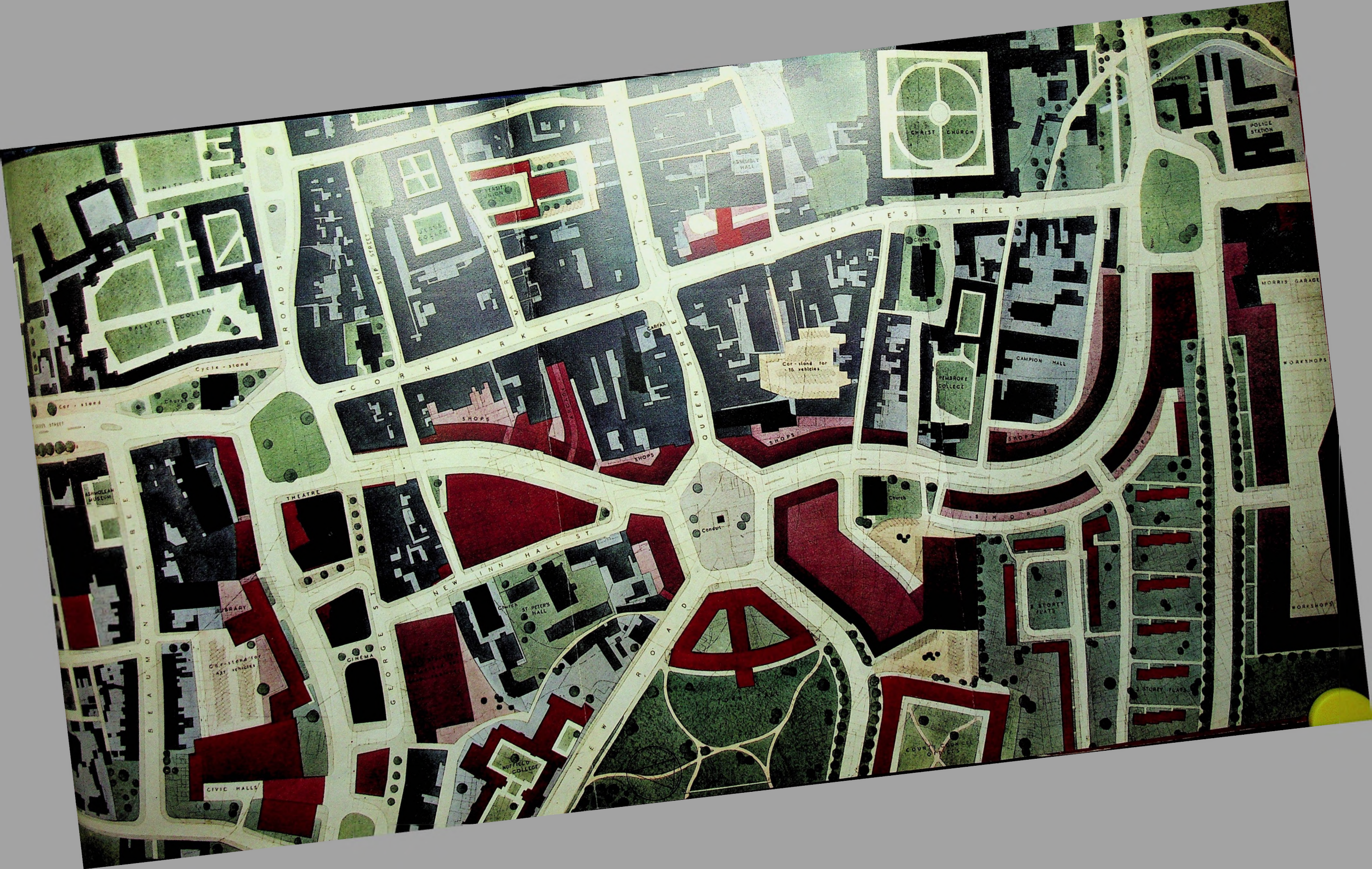
Although the present Town Hall is only fifty years old, it is entirely inadequate for housing the many Corporation Departments that have extended or come into being since it was built. These departments are now scattered in many parts of the city, in makeshift quarters. The present building is too cramped to be capable of adaptation, and it is very necessary that a new one be built at an early date. The position of the Town Hall in the hierarchy raises a special difficulty at Oxford since there is a competitor, and one with very substantial claims, for what is clearly the best available site in the city centre. That site is the one which will be formed by New Road and the proposed *Newgate* where they enter the new square which has here been given the name *New Carfax*—or, for those who know Oxford well, the best description of it may be merely that it is at Mac Fisheries' corner. The competitor is the County Council offices: and the claims of the County Council are based strongly on the fact that it is the freehold owner of the greater

the proposed redevelopment around Carfax

part of the site between New Road and Castle Street, including the large area which will become available for building purposes in a few years when the Prison is removed. The County Council has, indeed, proposed that the whole of this site should be given over to new County Offices and to Law Courts and other public buildings of a similar kind. This would mean a great concentration of masonry on a site which should be left open. There is no single public open space of any kind in the centre of Oxford. And this is not only the one site that is available; it is, with its river frontage and its historical monuments of Castle and Castle Mound, a singularly appropriate place for a central park. But be that as it may, it is certain that the eastern part of the site is pre-eminently the position for the Town Hall. It is a commanding as well as an extremely convenient site. On the *New Carfax* square it will face down Queen Street and High Street. On its western side it will ride along the top of the rise from the river. Every effort should be made to persuade the County Council to forgo its claims, for although the presence of the County Offices in the county town is both welcome and appropriate, it would be regrettable in the extreme if those offices were to command the principal square and the historical main street of a city with whose administrative affairs the County Council is entirely unconcerned.

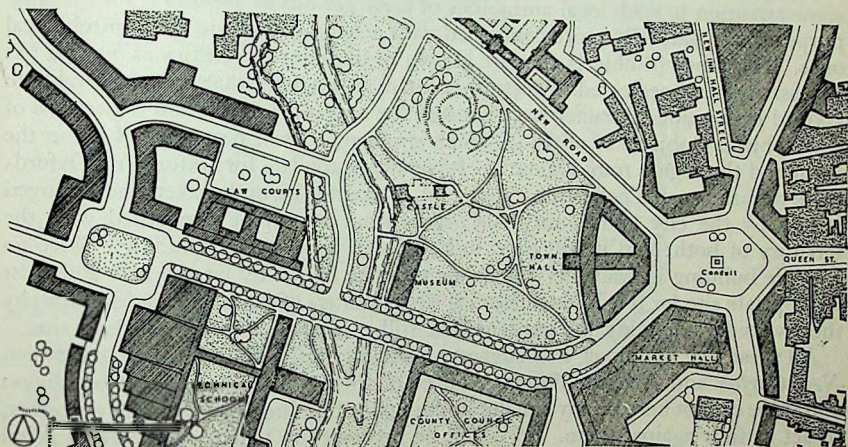
A word should be said here about the *New Carfax* square on to which the Town Hall will face. The angles at which the five entering roads come together, and the amount of space which must be provided for traffic circulation, produce a *place* of a more formal shape than would have been suggested if the position had been rather freer. The other two main squares on the new central road, *George Square* and *Christ Church Square*, for example, can be given a much less formal shape, and since they will not be fully and regularly built up on all sides, there need be no suggestion of monumentality in the final effect. Nor can there be any in the new square at the Plain, for there will be no buildings immediately around it. Nor in the necessarily large new square at the stations. The proposed *Newgate Square* must be regular: but again it will not be rigidly formal. It is only in this *New Carfax* square that there will be any high degree of formality in shape. Since, however, this happens entirely out of functional necessity, and is in no way forced, and since, in any case, one formal square in this informal city may have high dramatic value by way of contrast, it should not appear to be out of place or out of character. It is suggested that for the central feature of this square the old conduit, which was removed from Carfax on account of traffic congestion as long ago as 1795, should be brought back from Nuneham park where it now stands.

Since it should be the city's own building which should occupy this dominant position, another site, and one of only a little less importance, must be found for the COUNTY OFFICES. These may very advantageously occupy the site of Paradise Square and land immediately adjoining it. Here the northern frontage of the building will face on to *Newgate* (which will afford direct access to the new stations) and beyond that on to the new park on the site of the Prison (which might be called *Castle Garth*): and on the west it will look over a wide strip of public gardens and a stretch of reclaimed river.



Another urgent city building, perhaps one of the most urgent of all, is that for a MUNICIPAL COLLEGE. The present schools of technology, art, and commerce are for the most part wretchedly ill-housed, and are scattered in various departments about the city. They should be brought together into one new building. Since it must accommodate some 2,000 pupils, and a good deal of bulky equipment in large workshops, this will be by far the biggest individual building in the city, as well as one of the most important.

The size of the building makes it difficult to find a good site for it. It is partly this that accounts for its unhappy history as a project. The search for a suitable site has gone on for a couple of decades and more. Some years ago the Workhouse



New Carfax and Newgate

site on Cowley Road was fixed on. It is not a good site. It is big enough for the buildings, but not for the necessary playing-fields; and there is no suitable place for these in the vicinity. And it is far too obscure a situation for Oxford's biggest building—merely a site enclosed by small houses running at right angles to one of the city's least attractive main roads. But unsatisfactory though its situation here would clearly be in relation to the planning of the city as a whole, there has been a natural disinclination, on the part of those most concerned with its establishment, to consider alternative sites after all these years of trouble. Now, however, it looks as though this Cowley Road site may not, after all, be released from its present use for hospital purposes. And even if it were, it would be regrettable that any new and more suitable site which the replanning of the city will make available should be declined merely because of the unfortunate history of the search for sites in the past. Such a site will, indeed, be made available under the present plan. It is the triangular site which will be formed between *Newgate*, the river, and the re-aligned *Oxpens Road*, just beyond the suggested site of the County Offices. This site is near to the new Transport Station. It is also on the proposed inner ring road. A substantial part of it (Osney Recreation Ground) is available for immediate build-

ing—as any acceptable alternative to the Cowley Road site clearly must be. And the rest of it could be available at an early date, since the Cattle Market, which now occupies this part, can very quickly be moved to its suggested new site on the opposite side of Oxpens Road. Extensive playing-fields, with a long river frontage, will be available adjacent to the college buildings. There can be little doubt that this situation is functionally far better than any other available situation: and the buildings here would occupy a site worthy of their importance.

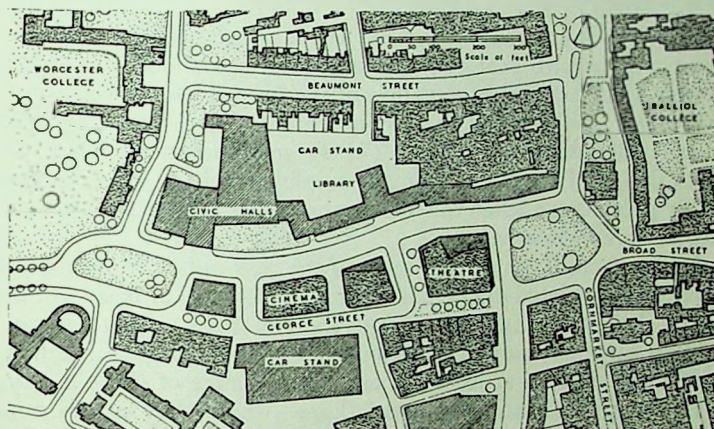
Besides the new LAW COURTS, for which there will be a good site on the opposite side of *Newgate* from the Municipal College, one further public building is suggested in this locality, namely, a CITY AND COUNTY MUSEUM. There is no such building in the city at present. The University museums, though they have paid some attention to such local antiquities of early periods as are useful for teaching purposes, are naturally more concerned with general collections than purely local ones. The range of objects that are known to museum authorities as *bygones* has necessarily been neglected. Most other towns in England that are comparable to Oxford in size and character have got together extremely important collections of these objects—objects of all kinds which are memorials of past ways of life in the town and the region round about it. It is still not too late for Oxford and Oxfordshire to make such a collection. It should, of course, be undertaken and arranged jointly by the city and county authorities since it will be concerned with the territory of both: and it will need to be housed in a special building. Since no suitable building is available, a new one must be built. By far the best and most appropriate site for it is in the historical surroundings of the Castle and Mound, by the riverside, adjoining the gardens that will eventually cover the Prison site.

All these five buildings, it is suggested, should be sited along *Newgate* between *New Carfax* and *Newgate Square*. Three of them will be very large buildings: and there cannot here be any smaller buildings, or buildings of a different character, to act as foils against them. So it will be necessary to take special care to avoid over-monumentality. But there should, indeed, be no great difficulty about this, for there will be an interplay of landscaped spaces and water as well as of buildings, and the buildings themselves need not be sited in any rigidly formal relationship to each other.

A second group of public buildings, fronting on to the new road which has been given the name *The Friary*, will be much more compact. The main building here will be the new ASSEMBLY HALLS. This is a convenient locality for them, for it is near the Transport Station and yet is very definitely in the main city centre. The best position is at the western end of the new road, running back towards Beaumont Street and flanking the southernmost buildings of Worcester College. The halls as they are here planned will contain a large auditorium to seat more than 2,000 people, and a smaller one to seat about 600. In addition there will be committee rooms, an exhibition hall, and ample restaurant and foyer space; for it is suggested that the halls should be used for conference purposes as well as for concerts and public meetings. There will be standing space for over 400 cars at surface and underground levels behind the halls, with approaches from Beaumont Street and Worcester Street as well as from the new road: and besides this, the multi-story building for standing cars, which it is proposed should be erected on the site of the old High School and which will accommodate over 1,400 cars, will be within a hundred yards.

These new Assembly Halls are not intended to supersede the large assembly room in the present Town Hall. That room should be kept for dances and other functions, for which the Assembly Halls will not be suitable. So, when the office quarters of the Town Hall are pulled down, the central portion of the frontage should be retained for entrance to the assembly room.

Still another public building that must be in the city centre is the CITY LIBRARY and ART GALLERY. As long ago as 1911 a committee of the City Council which was appointed to consider the development of the City Library reported that the present building was 'overcrowded in almost every department and the building ill-adapted for the purpose'. The intervening thirty-five years have not brought any improve-



The Friary

ment, especially since a totally new conception of the service which a library should give has arisen in the meanwhile. A new building is urgently required. *The Friary* will offer a good site for this building, too: a site immediately adjacent to the new Assembly Halls, where a long and important frontage will be available. The City Art Gallery might be housed in the same building.

These new buildings, Assembly Halls and Library, will face the present Ritz Cinema and the New Theatre. Immediately adjoining, in Beaumont Street, are the Ashmolean and the Playhouse. There is another cinema round the corner of *George Square*, in Magdalen Street. There will thus be, in this locality, no less than seven big entertainment and 'cultural' buildings within a radius of two hundred yards. The new buildings have not been suggested here with any intention of artificially establishing a 'centre'. They are put here because these are the best sites that are available for them and because they are good sites. And, indeed, since none of the seven buildings is in any formal relationship to the others, no sense of an artificial centre should be created. All the same, deliberate steps should be taken to avoid over-monumentality by using the blocks on each side of the Ritz Cinema for shops and not merely for offices or for other new public buildings. Shop windows carried round from George Street would create a desirable liveliness in the architectural character of *The Friary* at this point, as will the

mere ground plans are not enough either in designing

or in portraying a scheme for rebuilding. Especially is that so in a city of established architectural character like Oxford. The third dimension in building, that is, height as well as length and breadth, must always be considered as an integral part of the plan. At the same time the planner cannot be expected to design all the new buildings in detail. He cannot do more than suggest an approximate indication of what is broadly planned. That is what the photographs of the models on the following four pages, and the drawings facing pp. 152 and 154, are intended to do. In studying these, allowance must be made for this—it should be remembered, for example, that all the new roofs will not necessarily be flat, as they are shown here: one of the reasons for their being shown like this is so that the new buildings can be more easily differentiated from the old.

The view on the page opposite shows the new road that will by-pass Cornmarket Street and St. Aldate's, looking north from just below Christ Church.

shopping frontage eastwards from the Library on the northern side. And this architectural character will require that two existing buildings should be much improved. What is now a neglected side elevation of the New Theatre, facing on to a narrow dead-end alley, will occupy the whole frontage of the new square. This and the northern side (which will front *The Friary*) should certainly be refaced. The northern façade of the Ritz Cinema is massive rather than beautiful: but it will be reasonably presentable when the inelegant samples of English external plumbing that deface it have been removed.

The availability of sites, then, requires that most of the new public buildings in Oxford shall be informally associated in two main groups. But two at least will be away from these groups—the main HEALTH CENTRE and the main YOUTH CENTRE. Both of these require a large area of open ground as well as large buildings. Clearly it will be impossible to find space for them in the centre of the old city, even if they would be most satisfactorily situated there—which they would not. The best place for them will be on the slum-clearance area beyond the Plain.

Here they will be at about the centre of the populated area. And this situation will serve a double purpose, for their playing-fields can provide the buffer of open space between the historical city and East Oxford which remains desirable even if the idea of creating 'twin cities' is not adopted. At the same time the buildings will be sufficiently big in bulk, and certain elements in them will have sufficient height, to give an adequate frame to the view across the open space from Magdalen Bridge, and a clear and emphatic beginning to the neighbourhoods beyond them.

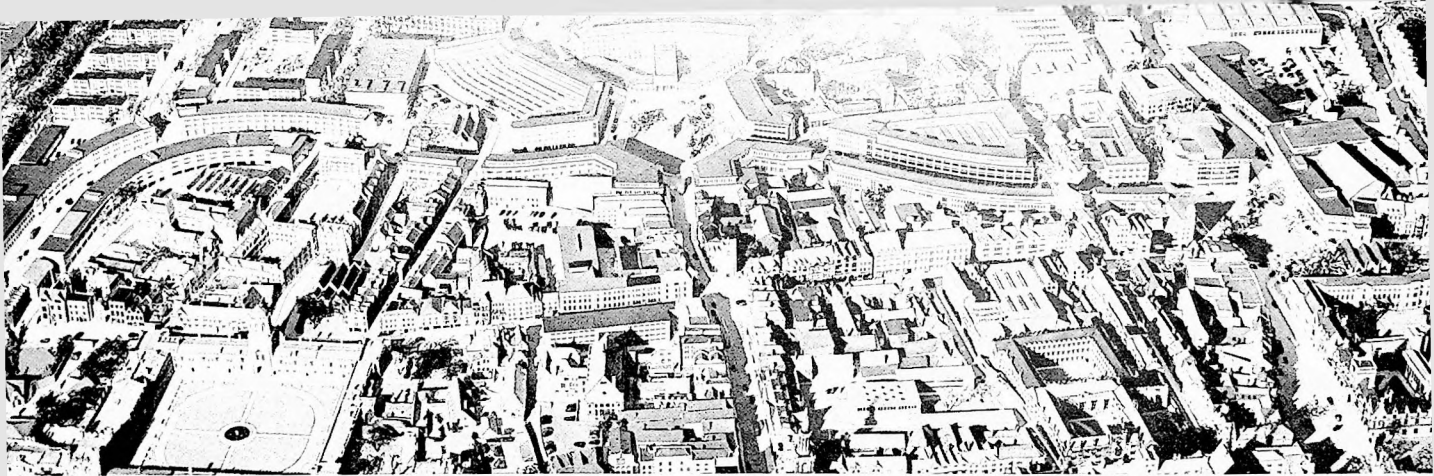
4. SERVICE BUILDINGS

a) *Shopping and commercial quarters*

Among all the various organizations, bodies, and individuals that have considered Oxford's planning problems in recent years, by far the commonest proposition has been that the present commercial centre should be restricted and partially removed to the eastern part of the city. This proposition has already been referred to in these pages; but it will be as well to consider the whole question briefly again, even at the risk of repetition, for it is a question that is of extreme importance to the present and future life of the city.

The arguments for limitation and removal have run thus. The central shopping area is too small for the city. The city's shopping is over-concentrated there. These conditions produce congestion. The shopping centre should not grow



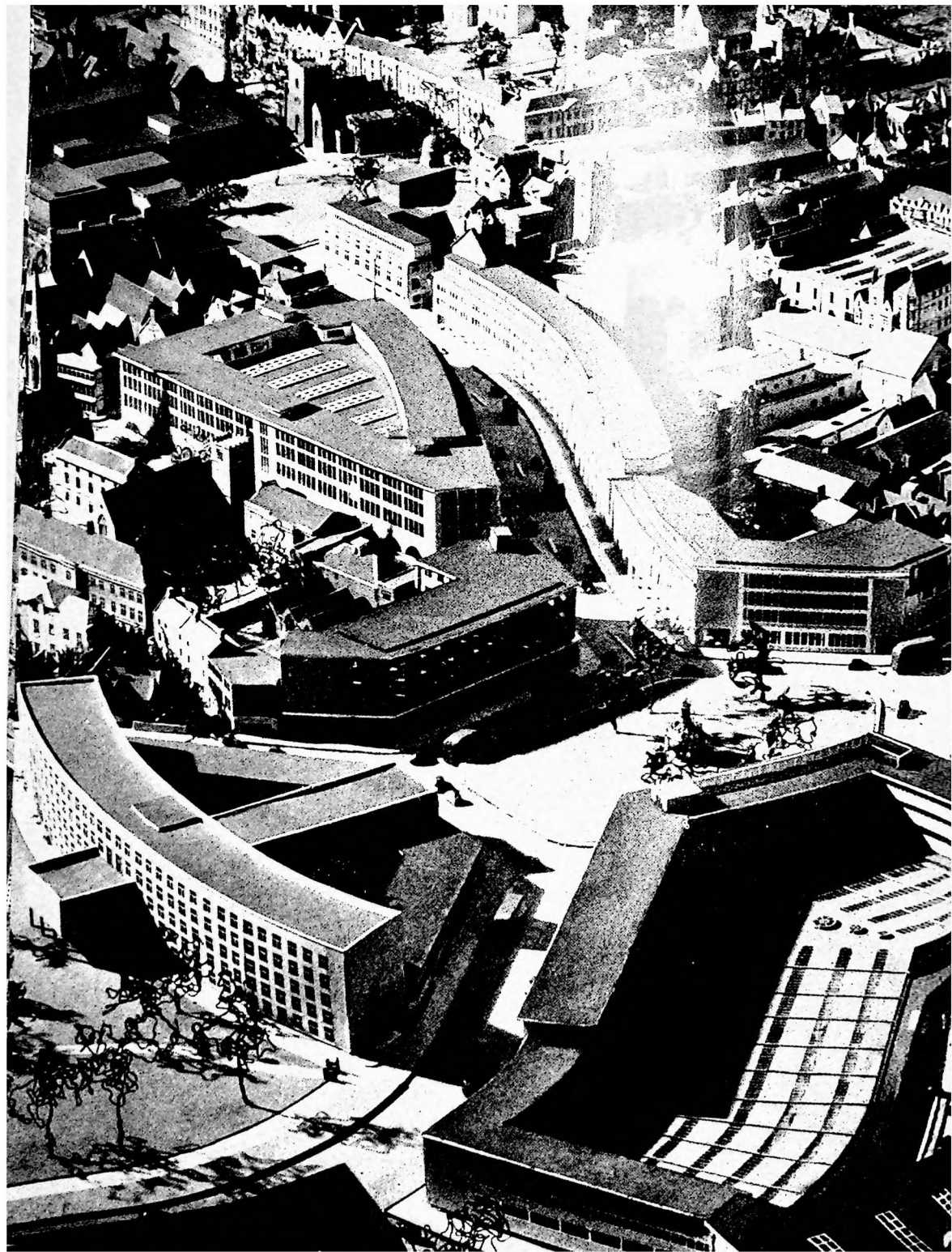


Above: A view looking west down High Street (about the centre) towards New Carfax and the new Town Hall, with the by-pass to Cornmarket Street and St. Aldate's running across the picture.

Below: A general view of the historical city looking north showing the redevelopment of St. Ebbe's and Osney on the left.

Opposite: A general view of the historical city looking east, showing New Carfax in the foreground and Merton Mall on the upper right.





the new Town Hall and the new Markets are to face

the new square which is proposed where the main new street crosses Queen Street just west of Carfax. The view opposite is taken facing north and shows the new street running towards another new square at the eastern end of George Street. The new Town Hall is shown, lower left, and the new Markets, lower right.

further because that would cause further congestion. Another reason why it should not grow is that it will interfere with the University. In any case it cannot grow because it is hemmed in by the University on some sides and geographical conditions stop its expansion on other sides. Which is a good thing. And since it cannot grow and should not grow, the expansion that would ordinarily take place should be directed to East Oxford.

Most of these arguments are false and the deductions from them are wrong. It is true that the shopping centre is too small, and it is true that its smallness causes congestion. But it is not true that the city's shopping is over-concentrated. And it is not true that further growth would cause further congestion. On the contrary, providing further growth took place on a plan which afforded freer movement of traffic, congestion would be relieved in the present centre and would be avoided in the extensions to it. It is also not true (as it has already been shown) that further growth of the commercial quarter must interfere with the University, for any possible growth can only be away from the university quarters and not towards them. Finally, it is seriously mistaken to suggest that expansion of the centre can and should take place elsewhere. It is mistaken because there cannot be two *separated* main shopping centres in any city under a metropolitan scale, and perhaps not even there. If by some means or other a second and separate centre, and not a mere sub-centre, is established (and that is so difficult to do as to be almost impossible), then the old centre will decline to the character of a sub-centre and perhaps die. If that happened to the present central shopping area of Oxford it would be disastrous to the city and the region, because communications on the east side of Magdalen Bridge can never produce a real centre, a nodal point, there. There can be no doubt whatever that the shopping centre of Oxford should and will remain where it is. Neglect to provide relief to the congestion there, by refusing to provide the means of expansion, will make congestion even more confounding, will produce further inefficiency, but it will not kill it as a shopping centre, and it will not bring another shopping centre into being. It will only bring disaster to the city. It is time that the counsels of imperfection that hanker after the ruin of the city's present shopping centre were silent and that action were taken to enlarge, not destroy, that centre.

There is no need to repeat here the arguments that have already been advanced in support of the proposal to establish the new roads, *Frewin Street* and *New St. Ebbe's Street*, which connect with the proposed *Merton Mall*; nor to show that these streets would inevitably relieve the present central streets. Nor is it necessary to produce lengthy arguments why these two streets will become Oxford's new shopping streets. Approximately parallel to Cornmarket Street, and on an average only 150 yards away, *Frewin Street* clearly offers first-rate shopping frontages. *New St. Ebbe's* already has shops at its northern end. And though the development of first-class shops on the southern part of *New St. Ebbe's* is not so nearly certain as it is on the other lengths of new street, the fact that this will be the direct route

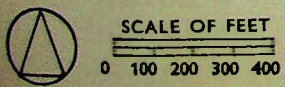
(and the bus route) to the eastern part of the city gives it advantages which make that development likely.

When *Frewin Street* is in existence, Cornmarket Street itself may be much improved as a shopping street by restricting it to north-travelling traffic. This will make it possible to widen the pavements from 8 feet to at least 12 feet, to the immense advantage of shoppers. Further, the carrying through of *Frewin Street* will afford an opportunity of building an arcade between Cornmarket Street and the new street, on the site of the present garage which occupies the yard of the Clarendon Hotel. This, too, should prove to be an attractive shopping place.

Of the other central commercial streets little need be said. Park End Street is unlikely to develop as a good shopping street, for the commercially dead length of New Road where it passes between the Nuffield College site and *Castle Garth* destroys that continuity of window display which seems to be an essential characteristic of successful shopping quarters. It will therefore, no doubt, continue in its present use as the principal quarter for motor showrooms—a use for which it is well suited. Hythe Bridge Street suffers from the same defect, since it is cut off from George Street by Nuffield College and Worcester College frontages. But this break is less than the break before Park End Street; and an attempt should be made to develop here that reaching out of shopping centre to railway station which is a natural tendency in all cities. As for George Street, that is now one of the main shopping streets, even if it is a dull one. Its dullness is no doubt due to the defect from which Park End Street and Hythe Bridge Street suffer, though here it occurs in a different form. Here the interruptions are caused by the long façades of theatre, cinema, school, and fire station. Since, however, the two latter buildings will be removed under this plan, and shopping frontages will be developed there, the chances of George Street becoming livelier and more successful should be much increased: and the conversion of the two end portions of the street into promenades unused by vehicles may help in this, though it is always difficult to forecast exactly what the result of this kind of action may be.

In all instances where it is possible, both old and new shopping streets should, of course, be given service lanes at the back, so that the loading and unloading of supplies can take place without interfering with the traffic in the streets themselves. A daily example of what happens when there are no proper arrangements of this kind occurs at the High Street entrances to the Market—a gloomy, congested building which houses the whole of the central retail shops for meat (and most of those for fish and vegetables). Here not only do standing vehicles add to High Street's congestion, but the carrying of bloody carcasses across crowded pavements does not increase their pleasantness. It is no wonder that the opinion is now widely held that the Market should be removed from this position. The new site for it must, of course, be central. The triangle running back from the south side of *New Carfax* between *Newgate* and *New St. Ebbe's* seems to be the proper place. Here the fall of the ground towards the south would permit of a service approach being constructed down to a basement floor which would be used for loading and unloading and for storage, while the Market itself would be on the same level as *New Carfax*.

- Shops
- Warehouses
- Workshops
- Offices
- Public Buildings
- University
- Technical Schools
- Residential
- Public Open Space
- Private Open Space
- Cattle Market
- Railway
- Existing Roads
- New Roads
- Car Stands
- Bus Station



To maintain a proper character and height in relation to the adjoining main streets, these frontages should be occupied by shops with offices above them: and the possibility of maintaining a view of Tom Tower along *Newgate* should be safeguarded by keeping the eastern part of the frontage down to a height of not more than three stories.

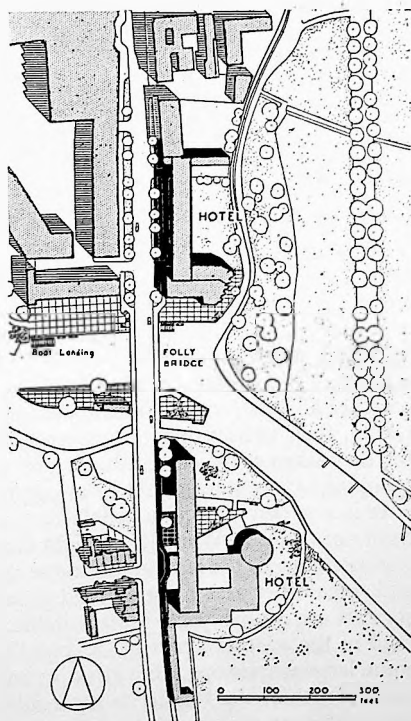
Sites for two other forms of commercial activity will need to be provided. Since the site of the present Cattle Market is needed for the new Municipal College, the market should be moved to the opposite side of *Oxpens Road*, with new buildings situated along the road frontage. Then there is need for properly defined zones for warehouses. It is suggested that these should be situated close to the railway station in the area behind *Hythe Bridge Street*, *Park End Street*, and the new part of *West Oxpens*.

As for office quarters, it is unnecessary to discuss them in detail here. They will, no doubt, continue to be provided mainly in streets like *Beaumont Street*, and in the upper floors of shopping premises. But one special building which is neither strictly shop nor office, namely, the Telephone Exchange, raises a problem of some difficulty. For some years the Post Office has been intending to erect an exchange between *Folly Bridge* and the Police Station at the southern end of *St. Aldate's*. This site is entirely unsuitable for this kind of building (though it offers a splendid site for a hotel). Protests were made against its intended use when that was first known: but since no other site was then available the Post Office went ahead with its plans. Here again the stoppage of civil building because of the war has given an opportunity to correct what would have been a serious mistake of siting. And there can be no excuse for the mistake now, for an admirable site for the purpose will be available between *West Oxpens* and *New St. Ebbe's*, at *Christ Church Square*.

(b) Hotels.

There is no need to state again the urgent need for new first-class hotels in Oxford. The present situation has already been described (see p. 71). If the city is to meet its needs as a university city, a regional centre, and a place for ordinary living and working, let alone as a tourist centre, it must double the capacity of its hotels within the next year or two.

It is fantastic that, in a situation like the present, one of the city's best hotels,



Sites for two new hotels at Folly Bridge

the redeveloped city from the south-east

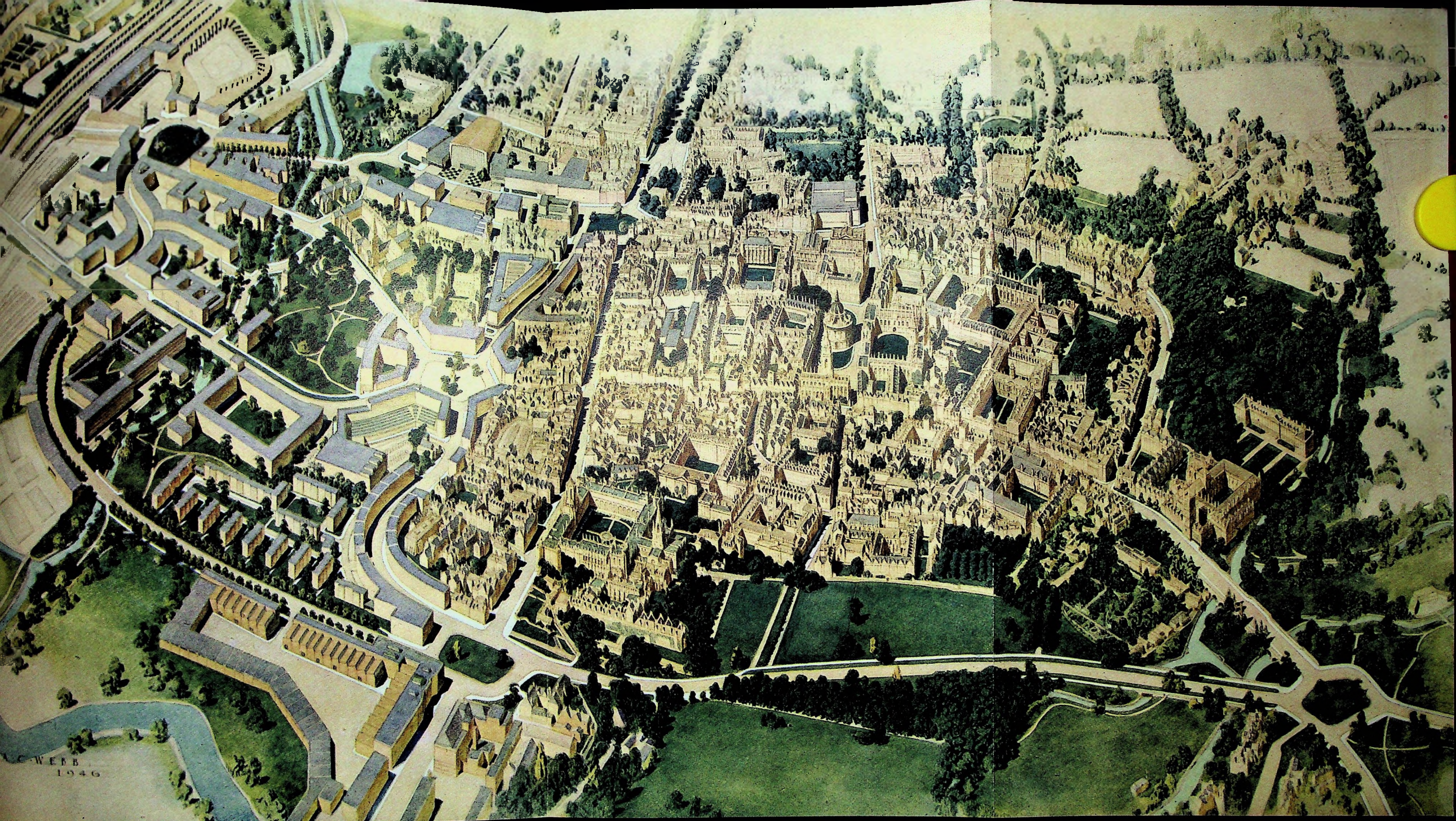
the Clarendon, should be threatened with destruction to make way for one of Messrs. Woolworth's stores. Fortunately this again is an example of something that was condemned being temporarily reprieved because of the war. Here, too, the reprieve should be made permanent—and not only because the Clarendon is most necessary as a hotel but because it is the one secular building which gives some part of Cornmarket Street a touch of architectural seamliness. As for new hotels, while it is not the business of this plan to define desirable sites in detail, there are two sites which are so outstanding for this purpose that they should be immediately acquired for it. One is the site between Folly Bridge and the Police Station, which has just been described as intended for telephone-exchange purposes. The other, an even better hotel site, is on the south side of Folly Bridge, a site which is partly occupied by Grandpont House. This, indeed, with its open view of the whole of the Eights Reach, with Christ Church Meadow to the north-east and Brasenose Cricket Ground to the south, is a superb site for a first-class hotel. On no account should it be allowed to be used for another purpose.

There are other utilities similar to hotels which need to be provided for Oxford citizens and Oxford tourists. Such as bathing-places and riverside restaurants, for example. Again it is no part of the purpose of this plan to suggest sites in detail: but one locality should be mentioned since it more or less suggests itself as a site for a restaurant, namely, the neighbourhood of Magdalen Bridge, when the blighted areas of St. Clement's have been cleared away and the eastern bank of the eastern arm of the Cherwell is free of buildings.

(c) *Workshops*

Though the industrial quarter of any city should generally be away from the city centre, there are always various productive trades and other similar undertakings that need to be close to it—trades such as printing, bookbinding, motor repairing, and many others of that kind which are housed in workshops rather than in factories: and besides these there are depots and yards connected with other trades, such as builders' yards and so on. While it would be absurd to try to group together all these trades, from the small one-man concern to the quite big undertaking, their indiscriminate scattering about the centre of the city is undesirable, for they often produce untidiness and sometimes a good deal of traffic. So *some* grouping at any rate should be attempted.

It is not easy to find a satisfactory situation for a workshop area near to the centre of Oxford. Workshops might share the sites which have been suggested for warehouses near the station, but these are almost certainly not big enough for both, and some other area must be held in reserve. The areas immediately west of the stations are probably the most suitable. That south of the proposed *East Oxpens* road in the southern part of St. Ebbe's is also suitable in many ways. There are some large workshops there already: and it is a convenient place as regards transport. Further, the locality is not really suitable for houses, or similar buildings. So a workshop area *may* have to develop there. But it is a most important position. Really the best plan would be for there to be no building at all, but for all the area



south of *East Oxpens* to be left open as a continuation of Christ Church Meadow. If that cannot be done at least a wide strip along the north bank of the river should be kept open as public space. And the workshop area, if one must be developed, should be laid out and built as a whole with carefully designed frontages on all three exposed sides.

(d) *Gas Works and Electricity Works*

At first glance it is surprising that, in a city where for decades past it has been a matter for despair to try to find even a fifth-rate site for important public buildings, there has been no attempt made to redevelop the outworn and partly unused area west of St. Ebbe's and the Prison—the very area where it is suggested in this plan that several new public buildings should be sited. But the reason is not far to seek. The whole of this area, and the whole of St. Ebbe's area also, is blighted by the gas works. There can be no proper development of this part of the city until these are removed.

Their removal would, of course, effect great improvements in other directions. They turn the Thames, for the half-mile stretch where they border it, into the same kind of river as the Irwell is in Manchester or the Don in Rotherham and Sheffield—a river as unfrequented for pleasure as an open sewer would be. They seriously mar the famous view of the city from Boars Hill: and they almost blot out the fine view which the traveller by train should get as he approaches Oxford Station from the south. The correction of these injuries alone would justify the removal of the works in the opinion of many who care deeply for beauty. But arguments based solely on a concern for beauty stand little chance of being listened to in England. And the argument for the removal of this blot must be pressed through the hard-headed contention that in their present position the gas works block the provision of buildings that are essential to the sound administration and proper development of the city.

The present works are bad enough—though in fairness it must be said that as gas works go they are no worse, and perhaps may even be a little less bad, than most. But the Gas Company proposes to double their size within the next two years, and is even now promoting a parliamentary Bill to obtain power to do so. The biggest gas-holder in the present works is 140 ft. high: the highest building is only 80 ft. The new gas-holders will be 160 ft. high: and among the various new buildings there is to be a massive vertical-retort-house that will rear up to a height of 130 ft. These buildings will not only add to the blight on St. Ebbe's: they will dominate the whole of the centre of the city. While the highest general building level in the city is about 50 ft., the highest features on the historical skyline are St. Mary's spire (200 ft.) and the lantern on the Radcliffe Camera (140 ft.) And these are mere points. The gas-retort-house will be anything but a point: it will be a loutish lump. It will be doubly a retort-house—an unanswerable and excessively rude retort that will knock the dreams out of Oxford's spires for ever.

The Gas Company will, of course, say—and truly say—that their retort-house and gas-holders and the rest need not be ugly. They can be, and may be, excellent examples of industrial architecture. That will not help them here. There is more important architecture than industrial architecture. And there is a scale of values (if we are still civilized) which is outraged by a proposition such as this, that a mere shell round a machine for making gas and pushing it into gas pipes should overtop

the redeveloped city from the south-west

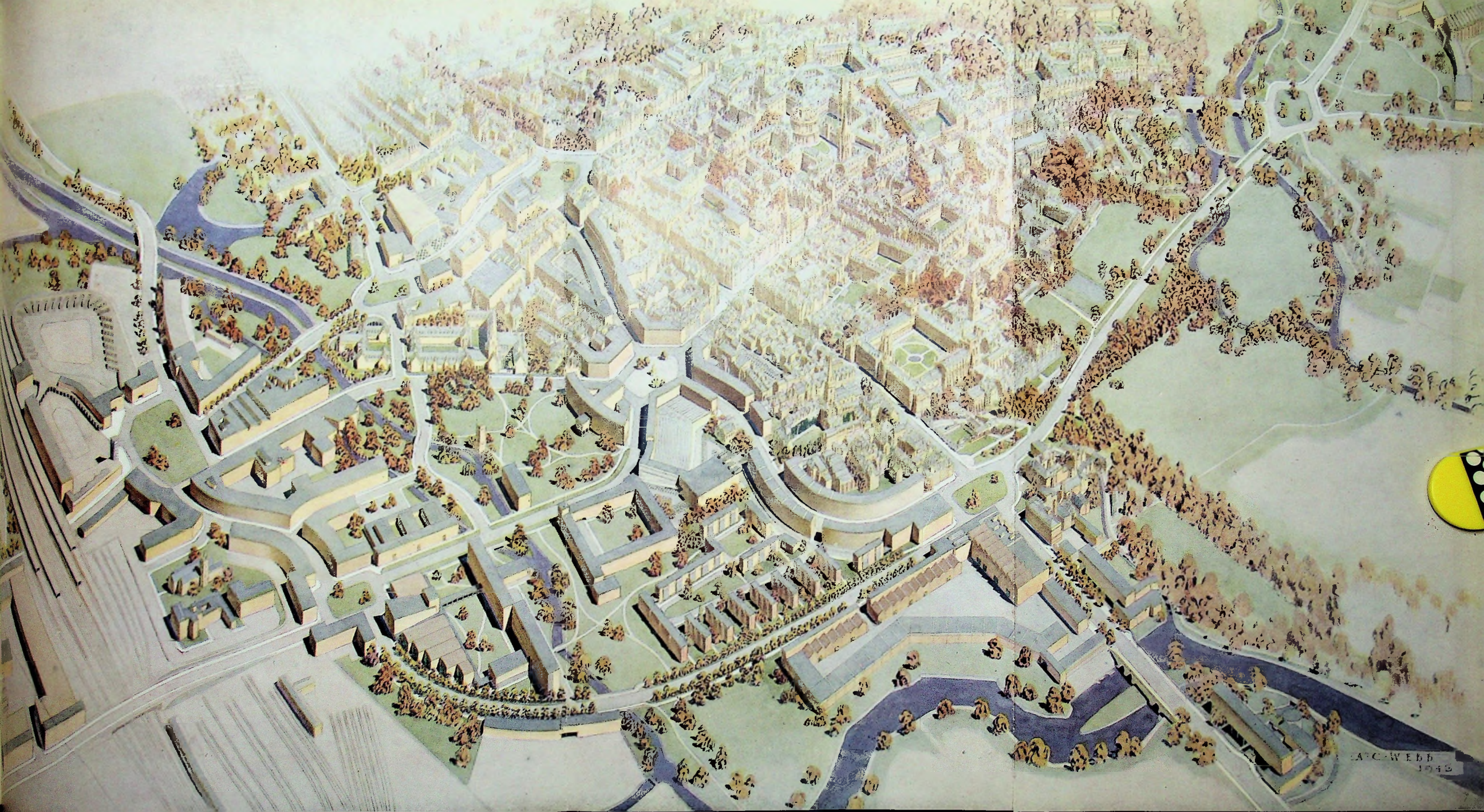
a whole collection of buildings which are not only noble in themselves but which symbolize all that has been noble in the aspirations of Englishmen for seven centuries and more. If historical Oxford, and all that it stands for, means anything to Oxford citizens and the people of England, and if town planning means anything at all, then this proposal will be outlawed as one offending all spiritual values and all canons of seemliness.

There will be difficulties, of course. The Gas Company will no doubt state them. But in the end it will come down to one thing: money. For if this proposed extension of the works is not allowed adjoining the present site, then it must be built on a new site, and that will involve the duplication of existing plant which would be used by the new plant in certain necessary processes. And if these new works are put elsewhere, then clearly the existing works should also, over a period of time (but the shortest possible period), be transferred there. There is no great difficulty about finding a proper site. There are excellent sites on or near the new industrial area at Cowley. But there is no doubt that transfer will be a costly business. Or it will seem so when the amount is considered as a single and separate item. Yet even in the mere matter of money the cost of transfer should be largely, if not wholly, met by the gain that will accrue by bringing back into usefulness the blighted areas in the city centre. And, moreover, even if the cost is high now, this is the last chance. A great opportunity of removing the works was missed as recently as twenty years ago, when by far the larger part of the present buildings and plant was newly erected on the south bank of the river. Now there is a less easy opportunity—and the last. For if the buildings that are now proposed are built (their estimated cost is about £600,000) it can be taken as beyond a doubt that Oxford's gas works will remain here, getting bigger and bigger, as long as coal gas is made and used as it is at present.

Whether it will be proposed that the electricity works must get bigger and bigger remains to be seen. They are somewhat farther away from the city centre, on the other side of the railway, just above Osney Lock. They are at present small, and not yet intolerably obtrusive. But no further growth of them, upwards or outwards, should be permitted. Demands for that growth are practically certain to come. It should be declared now that nothing of the kind will be tolerated. The place for Oxford's electricity works, as well as the gas works, *if they must be in the city at all*, is at Cowley.

§ 5. LIVING QUARTERS

The proposals for the establishment of public buildings, open spaces, and workshop areas in the St. Ebbe's and Osney districts, and for the extension of the University westwards across St. John's Street and Walton Street, which have been outlined above, will involve the clearance of a large number of houses. These houses are all slummy or outworn, and will in any case have to be demolished. But it will be bad planning to let the public needs in the city centre result in the wholesale banishment of citizens to the suburbs. There are many people whose



work requires that they should live close in to the centre: and there are many people who prefer to live there.

After the public and university needs have been met, the areas available for new living quarters in St. Ebbe's and Jericho will be very much diminished. If rehousing took place by way of building ordinary single-family houses, only a small fraction of those who now live in these localities could be reaccommodated there. Clearly rehousing will have to be by way of flats. It is generally held nowadays that blocks of flats should either be three or four stories high¹ or seven or eight stories, or more. This is because three stories is as high as people should be expected to climb without lifts: and lifts are seriously uneconomical for blocks of flats under seven or eight stories. Any buildings of this latter height in or near the historical city would be an architectural disaster. Even four-storied buildings *en masse* might have a regrettable effect on the famous skyline. So the redevelopment of these two near-central districts for living quarters should be undertaken by building blocks of flats three stories high.

§ 6. CITY WALLS AND GREEN WALLS

In any historical city where the ancient defensive walls, or considerable stretches of them, have survived the centuries that have elapsed since they were necessary in England, the laying open of those walls on the external side is one of the most effective actions that can be taken to bring out in a dramatic way the full historical flavour of the place. It also may serve admirably to introduce a telling break between old and new, between ancient and modern.

Considerable stretches of walls survive in Oxford, and one lengthy stretch (though by no means the best) is quite clear of buildings and open to the public where Deadman's Walk runs between it and Merton Field. There are other lengthy stretches in the grounds of Christ Church and along the north side of Brewer Street: and there are short stretches and a few broken bastions in other places. By far the longest and much the best stretch is that running through the grounds of New College and along its eastern boundary. Here walls, ramparts, and bastions exist to their full height in an excellent state of preservation, and the *internal* face is finely seen in the beautiful setting of the college gardens.

Part of this New College stretch is the only section of the walls that could be laid bare without very great difficulty. The length behind Holywell Street is obscured by the College's New Buildings: and these are too substantial and too necessary to the College to be pulled down merely to open up the walls. The buildings obscuring the section in Longwall Street are much less substantial. Their demolition, for the purpose of baring the walls, is even now being considered by Magdalen College, which owns them. The willingness to undertake this shows a generous public spirit: but it would, nevertheless, be unfortunate if it were done, for these houses lining Longwall Street are as attractive a part of historic Oxford as the walls themselves, and their loss would be a serious one. If some day they become so ruinous or structurally unsound that they must be pulled down, then certainly no new or buildings should be erected in their place and the walls should be left open. But in the meanwhile nothing more should be attempted than the removal of the incon-

¹ The top two floors of a four-story block being used for maisonnettes, if those are thought to make satisfactory dwellings.

gruous and badly sited garage at the turn of the road, so as to provide an entry to a wide strip of grass-and-footpath running at the foot of the wall towards the southern end of the street. If, in addition, New College could be persuaded to dedicate a right of way along the Slupe (the outside face of the northern section of the walls), or at least to open it to the public during the hours of daylight, and also to provide or permit the Corporation to provide entrances to it from the western end of Holywell Street, and from New College Lane, then the whole 500-yard length of this best section of the walls would be open to public view.

Since there are not sufficiently continuous lengths of city walls to make anything approaching a full circuit, and since, in any case, no substantial depth in front of the walls can be opened out, another means must be found of providing a break between ancient and modern. The means in Oxford are clear—and are already in use. Instead of the vertical barrier of city walls, the horizontal barrier of open space may be used. Such a barrier exists along the eastern side and half of the southern side, in the Magdalen grounds, Angel Meadow, Magdalen cricket ground, Merton Field, and Christ Church Meadow. That will be strengthened at its weakest point, at Magdalen Bridge, by the addition of the open spaces which have already been suggested on the site of the St. Clement's clearances. On the westerly part of the southern side, the park strip suggested on both banks of the river (when the gas works are removed), and the playing-fields suggested for the Municipal College, will provide it. And on the western side it will be provided by wide riverside gardens running from Oxpens Bridge to Hythe Bridge, by the park which it is suggested should be developed on the site of the Prison, and by the grounds of Worcester College. Only on the northern side will there be no barrier: and indeed there cannot be, for some of the first buildings of the University, in Balliol, St. John's, Trinity, and Wadham Colleges, overflowed the city walls centuries ago in this direction—the one direction in which geography itself did not provide a barrier.

§ 7. ENSEMBLE

From the broad principles of planning which have now been set out, and from the main proposals that have been described, it is possible to see what the historical centre of Oxford as a whole will be like if this plan is adopted and carried out.

The old university quarter will be more or less unchanged, with the old domestic streets and the little lanes, as well as the colleges, preserved in their present character. The main shopping streets, High Street and Cornmarket Street, also little changed in general, will be greatly changed in one important particular, for much of the traffic which now congests them will have been diverted to new streets. A new road running north of the Broad Walk, and new city streets running west of St. Aldate's and Cornmarket Street, will carry the bulk of the central traffic, including all bus services, except a single shuttle service which will run along High Street between the Plain and the new Transport Station. The new street running north and south just beyond Carfax will be the main street of a much-extended shopping centre. Westwards of the square made where this street crosses Queen Street there will be a number of new public buildings and a new park on the site of the old prison. There will also be new public buildings lining a new road across the site of Gloucester Green. Northwards of this the university quarter will flow

over St. Giles towards Walton Street. There will be groups of new flats at Jericho and St. Ebbe's. The gas works and electricity works will disappear from their present sites. Across Magdalen Bridge the present blighted streets will give place to a stretch of urban parkland beyond which modern Oxford will begin anew. The river-banks will be cleared and clean, and riverside gardens will run up through the changed Osney district to Worcester grounds and Port Meadow.

Eastwards of Carfax it will be the old city. Westwards it will be mostly new. The old is very beautiful. We must see that the new is not wholly unworthy of it.

6

THE MIDDLE AND OUTER CITY

This report cannot deal in detail with the planning of all the various elements which go to make up the modern city; nor can the plan itself suggest detailed arrangements for housing quarters, or indicate sites for schools, local shopping groups, and other elements of that kind. The most that can be done is to suggest in outline the broad *principles* which should apply in the organization of the extra-central parts of the city for the purposes of convenience, and to indicate broadly some of the major provisions that are necessary to apply those principles in Oxford. The main broad questions that require consideration concern the disposition of neighbourhoods, open spaces, and industrial areas.

§ 1. NEIGHBOURHOODS

(a) *General Principles*

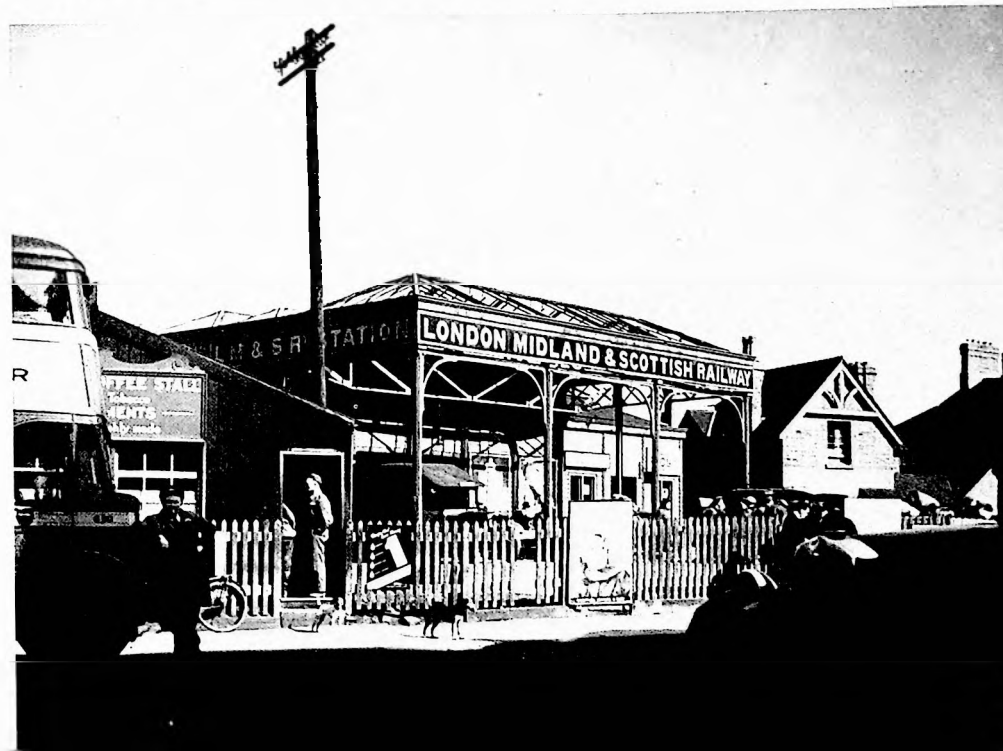
Perhaps the most important single conception that has developed since towns began to be deliberately planned is one which has evolved during the last two decades—the conception of organizing the town on the basis of a structure of neighbourhoods. The ideas behind this theory of planning are so important, and are still so little known, that it may be as well to summarize them before proceeding to suggest in outline a possible grouping of neighbourhoods in the city.

Neighbourhood planning attempts to achieve two main purposes. These are: (1) the promotion of what may be called the social health of the town; and (2) the establishment of more convenient arrangements and relationships between the different kinds of utilities necessary for everyday living, i.e. homes, shops, schools, and so on.

On the sociological side the purpose is to overcome the social difficulties and dangers which almost inevitably occur when a town grows big. The unorganized great cities of to-day are far too big to be apprehended as a whole; personal contacts and group contacts are made difficult; interest in the city and in civic affairs

Oxford stations have come to be spoken of with the kind

of joke that people make to keep them from the black despair of hope continually deferred. These views (opposite) flatter them. The Great Western Station (above) would disgrace a Lancashire industrial town. The London Midland and Scottish Station (below) looks as though it belongs to a small and decayed prairie camp. They have been like this for generations. At last they may get rebuilt within the next year or two. It is proposed that they should be joined as one railway station and that the new bus station should be situated alongside to make a complete Transport Station.





Oxford's old and new suburbs show a great contrast.

North Oxford (opposite, above) has a fine 'scale' both in its buildings and its trees. Cowley (opposite, below: though it might equally well be almost any of the recent suburbs) entirely lacks 'scale' and 'character'. North Oxford looks rather like a park: Cowley rather like a desert. Much tree planting is necessary in the new suburbs. It cannot wholly redeem them, but it would help to make them look less raw and more settled.

and their management is lost; people tend to get segregated into the large single-class quarters which are associated with the East End-West End subdivision of towns. Even in a city of Oxford's size, these characteristics are very marked. The subdivision of the town into apprehensible units within which a 'sense of neighbourhood' may be experienced, and the encouragement of co-operative association between different social classes in these units, is intended to overcome the social and civic difficulties from which large towns suffer.

While it is impossible to define precisely the size of group within which the 'sense of neighbourhood' is experienced, a group of about 10,000 persons is thought by sociologists to be somewhere near the desirable size. Members of such a group, under ordinary urban conditions, will be within about ten minutes' walk of the central point of the neighbourhood; and the group will, on the one hand, be large enough to include a wide variety of personal characteristics, tastes, and experiences, and, on the other hand, small enough to provide occasion for acquaintance among its members. Furthermore, a unit of 10,000 people is said to be large enough to maintain most of the communal facilities required for the full development of neighbourhood life.

But neighbourhood planning arises out of more than these social considerations. Mere convenience requires it as well. It is clearly desirable that the various day-to-day domestic needs in shops, and other conveniences of that kind, should be satisfied in the neighbourhood of the home and not involve a special journey to some other district. And this is especially so under modern conditions of traffic. Hitherto the road has been a unifying agent in a town; it has helped to knit the town together. Now the main arterial road, at least, is a severing agent. It slices a town into separate parts: and crossing from one part to another may involve not only inconvenience but considerable personal danger (especially to the very young and the old). As time goes on and as traffic increases this severance will become even greater. The division of the town into districts, then, is inevitable; and it should be a main purpose of planning to see that these districts are capable of functioning adequately to meet the needs of their inhabitants—in other words, that they can be organized and realized as neighbourhoods.

If the desirable size of a neighbourhood for social purposes can only be more or less guessed at, its desirable size for convenience can be fixed more accurately. That size may differ to some extent according to the different purposes that the area is to serve or provide; and, to determine it, it is necessary to select some basic indispensable local service, work out the desirable unit for this purpose, and see how the requirements of other services fit. There can be little doubt that the basic indispensable local service in our civilization is the education of the young child. The neighbourhood unit must therefore bear a definite relation to the desirable units for junior education.

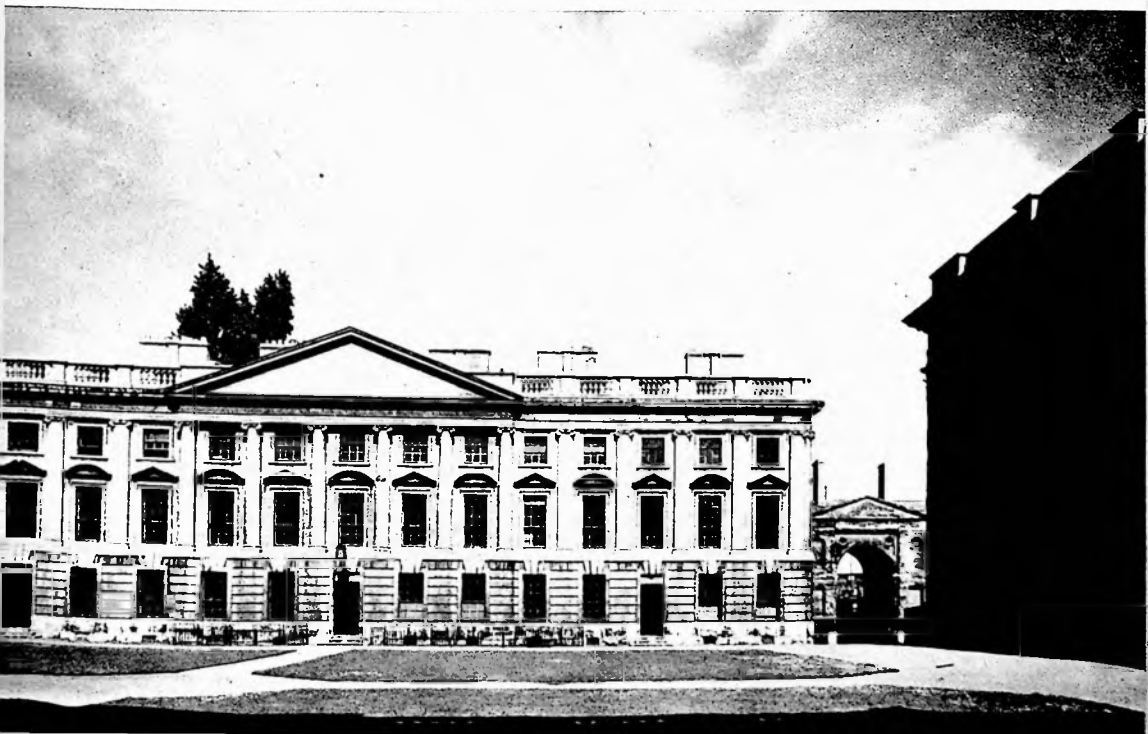
Merton College and Christ Church offer a comparison

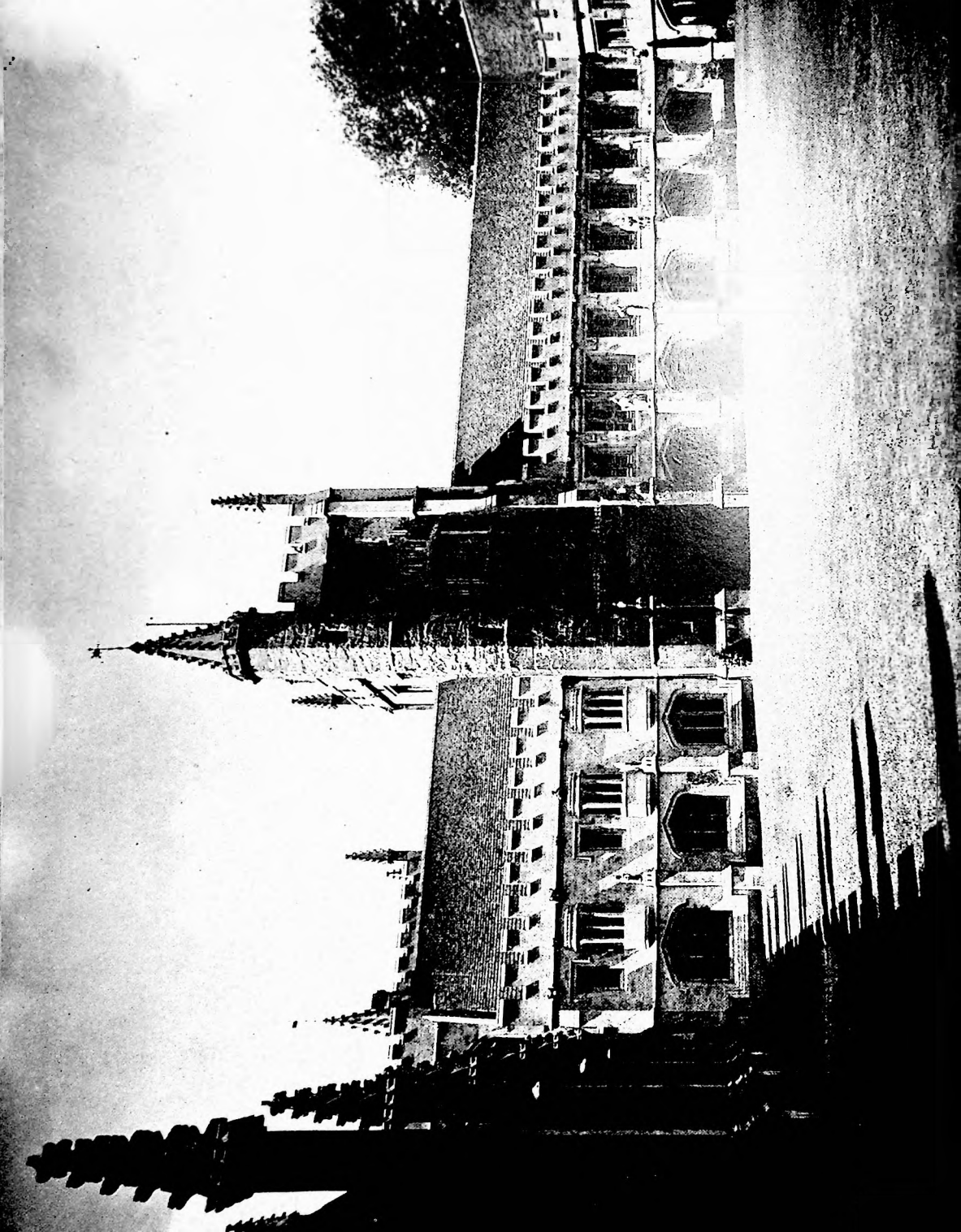
between gradually restored and entirely refaced stone work. Fellows' Quad, Merton (opposite, above): Peckwater Quad, Christ Church (opposite, below). Over a longish course of years the refaced buildings will weather and gain patina: but in the meanwhile a part of Oxford's history has been erased in them.

Children up to the age of eleven, at least, should not be expected to face the dangers of crossing an arterial road between home and school. This suggests a population unit of between 4,000 and 5,000. Such a unit would have one school for children between five and seven and one for children between eight and eleven (there would, of course, also be a number of nursery schools). But it is probably desirable that some choice of school should be available; and, where it can be arranged, a neighbourhood should be twice the size of that unit, i.e. should contain a population of between 8,000 and 10,000.

The desirable sizes of a neighbourhood for social and junior educational purposes, then, coincide very neatly. This same size is also convenient for other purposes, e.g. it will support a sufficiently varied local shopping centre, a clinic, and a number of other such services. It can be said, therefore, that for general neighbourhood purposes a population of something like 8,000 or 10,000 will make a reasonably satisfactory grouping. But besides its size, the arrangement of the various elements within and about the neighbourhood is important. And so is the possibility of giving it definition and identity. One of the chief reasons why there is so little feeling for neighbourhood in our present towns is that there are no recognizable boundaries: the 'ward', the only territorial subdivision in an 'urban district', has no significance except for local government purposes and no recognizable shape at all. If in the future each urban neighbourhood can be given a clear identity, then the neighbourhood may take the place of the ward and may even become a local government as well as a social unit.

It has been said that the main arterial road is the great severing agent in the town. This, then, is the means of giving definition. The sensible way to plan a town (a large or medium-large town, that is, for a small town should not contain any arterial road at all) is to arrange the main arteries so that they pass by the neighbourhoods, running between one neighbourhood and the next. The efficient functioning of each arterial road itself will require that the number of entries to it from a neighbourhood should be the minimum which is consistent with proper access between the various parts of the town; and wherever an entry occurs it will need to be carefully organized. Further, there should not be any house frontages with direct access on to the artery. Even housing behind service roads is unsatisfactory. So it follows that ideally there should be open spaces alongside these roads; and, in fact, playing-fields and other open spaces may very well be situated there. In this position the open-space system of each neighbourhood will serve to give a park-like character to the arterial roads; its own usefulness will be increased in that it forms a continuous strip instead of being made up of scattered plots; every house in the neighbourhood will be within ten minutes' walk of open space; and yet, however generous or even over-generous the amount of open space may be, the character of the neighbourhood may still remain genuinely urban, instead of being diluted to a suburban thinness. And, in addition to all this, the





the Cloisters, Magdalen, is an example of that handsome

combination of trim greensward and stone-walled buildings which makes some of the Oxford colleges seem as near perfection as human creations can hope to get. Part of the problem in the new work to be done in the city is to achieve the kind of marriage between 'natural' and 'artificial' materials which is achieved here.

open-space buffer between adjoining neighbourhoods will declare and define their separate identities within the greater whole which is the town.

In every neighbourhood there should be some chief focal point, some definite centre. Here the main public and semi-public buildings should be situated; and the shops and the pubs. Among the chief buildings there should be a Neighbourhood Centre, a Health Centre, a Youth Centre, churches and church halls, a branch library, smaller clubs' buildings, and branch administrative buildings. The shops should be sufficient for all day-to-day purposes; but in addition to the shops in the central neighbourhood group there will need to be one or two small groups of the corner-shop variety, for it is now generally agreed that every house should have a shop or two within a quarter of a mile's distance. Further, as there need to be additions below the neighbourhood scale, in the provision of local groups of shops, for example, so there need to be additions above it. There are certain utilities which cannot be economically provided for and supported by so small a unit as a neighbourhood but which nevertheless should be available outside the city centre. Among these are a cinema, a swimming-bath, and a large dance hall. And there are certain kinds of shops which the neighbourhood cannot support, but which should nevertheless be available in the *locality*. Thus there is need for a unit between the neighbourhood centre and the city centre. This may be called the community centre. It will generally serve a group of two, three, or perhaps even four neighbourhoods for these few special purposes.

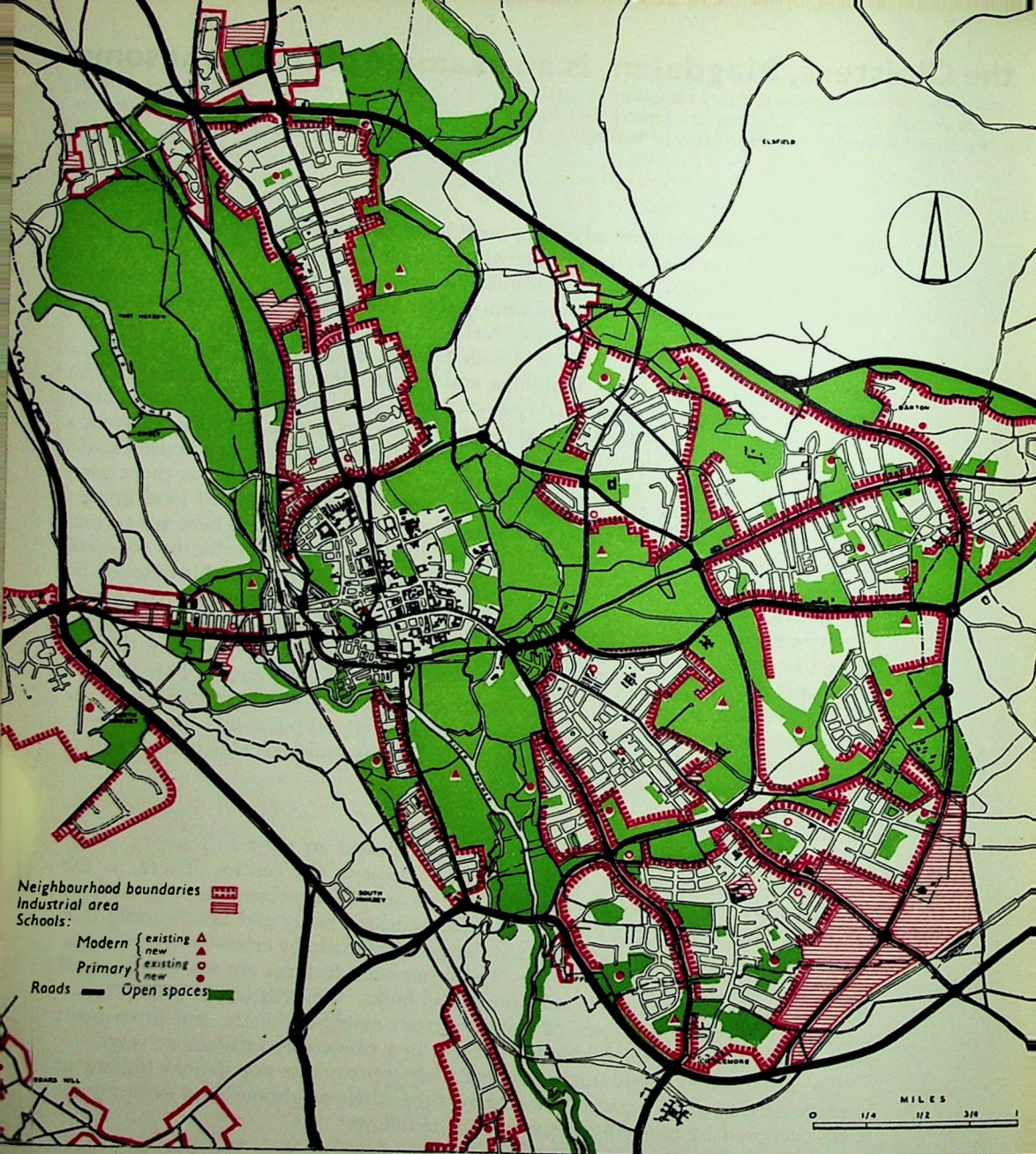
With some such broad organization as this, towns could be made more friendly, more efficient, and more convenient to live in.

(b) Oxford Neighbourhoods and Communities

Theoretic principles cannot, of course, be applied in their full purity to an established city, especially in the districts closest to the centre. There, as the radial roads approach the city core, like the spokes of a wheel approaching the hub, the spaces between them become too narrow to fall easily and satisfactorily into a neighbourhood system; and the angular patterns made by cross-town communications, railways, rivers, floodlands, and other such features are apt to leave odd areas severed from the main neighbourhood bulks. Nevertheless it is possible to establish in Oxford a system of some fourteen neighbourhoods, and three main community centres, which should function in a reasonably satisfactory way.

These suggested neighbourhoods, and their approximate populations (taking an average density of 30 persons per acre over the whole neighbourhood except those parts occupied by major open spaces) are as follows:

1. *Marston*: stretching from Marston village down to New Marston, and on to the east a little beyond Pullen's Lane; approximate population 6,500.
2. *Old Headington*: the triangle between the Marston neighbourhood, London Road, and the Northern By-pass; approximate population 6,500.



neighbourhoods and open spaces

3. *Barton*: the district beyond the Northern By-pass and the Roman Way at Headington Quarry; approximate population 8,000.
4. *New Headington*: the district between London Road and Old Road; approximate population 7,000.
A Community Centre for these four areas might well be situated in the vicinity of Headington House; and the present shopping area on London Road might well develop into the district shopping centre.
5. *Wood Farm*: the district between Old Road and Cowley Marsh; approximate population 6,500.
6. *Temple Cowley*: the district running eastwards from Temple Cowley; approximate population 5,000.
7. *Cowley*: the district between the Henley Road and Cowley Road as far as Florence Park on the north and Littlemore on the south; approximate population 8,500.
8. *Iffley*: the district west of the Henley Road southwards from the brook below Freeland: approximate population 4,000.
9. *St. Clement's*: the district between the Plain and Cowley Marsh, Iffley Road, and Hill Top Road; approximate population 8,500.
10. *St. John's*: the small district isolated by the Iffley Road and the Thames between Freeland and Jackdaw Lane; approximate population 3,000.
A Community Centre for these six areas should be established in the locality of Cowley Marsh; and a new and fully equipped district shopping centre, complete with chain stores and multiple stores, should be established on a length of the new inner ring road here.
11. *North Oxford*: between the University Parks and Lathbury Road; approximate population 6,500.
12. *Summertown*: between Lathbury Road and the Northern By-pass; approximate population 7,000.
A Community Centre and district shopping centre for these two neighbourhoods might be established at South Parade.
13. *Grandpont*: the narrow urban tongue along the Abingdon Road, southwards from Folly Bridge; approximate population 4,500.
14. *Hinksey*: the present scattered housing quarters beyond the Western By-pass, consolidated into a neighbourhood; approximate population 8,500.

§ 2. OPEN SPACES

In a sensibly planned town the public open spaces, i.e. the public gardens and parklands, the public playing-fields, the school grounds, and so on, should clearly be systematized; and the system they make should be closely related to the neighbourhood system, for most of them, except those in or attached to the central area, will have a mainly local rather than a general use. The system should, indeed, as it has already been suggested, help to define the neighbourhoods as well as serve them. But before a proper system can be devised it is necessary to attempt to settle the standards according to which the various kinds of open space should be provided.

(a) *Standards of Provision*

No generally acceptable standards in the provision of open space have yet been determined. Nor are they likely to be, since it is impossible in this, as in so many other matters of town planning, to lay down scientific rules and regulations. But one part, at least, of the standard suggested by the National Playing Fields Association is widely recognized as a desirable one—though it has been found impossible to achieve it in the replanning of large cities. This standard requires a minimum of 4 acres of permanently dedicated public playing-fields per 1,000 inhabitants, in addition to public gardens and parkland and private open space.

In addition to these public playing-fields, the Board of Education will require approximately $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land per 1,000 inhabitants, the division of this area among the various kinds of school being as follows:

TABLE 9
LAND REQUIRED FOR SCHOOLS

<i>Type of school</i>	<i>Pupils in each school</i>	<i>Area of school and playground, acres</i>	<i>Area of playing-field, acres</i>	<i>Acres per school</i>	<i>Total population per school</i>
Nursery	40	$\frac{1}{2}$	—	$\frac{1}{2}$	2,500
Infant	175	2	1	3	5,000
Junior	280	2	3	5	5,000
Boys' Modern . .	450	3	13	16	20,000
Girls' Modern . .	450	3	13	16	20,000
Technical	270	2	8	10	30,000
Boys' Grammar . .	360	2	11	13	60,000
Girls' Grammar . .	360	2	11	13	60,000
Young People's College	270	9	16	25	60,000
Technical College .	—	—	10	—	—

Public and school playing-fields together, then, would on these standards amount to $8\frac{1}{2}$ acres per 1,000 inhabitants. If to this are added the areas required for public gardens and parklands, and for private playing-fields, it will be seen that according to these theoretically ideal standards something like a dozen acres of land is required for open spaces (exclusive, of course, of private park and garden space) for every thousand residents. This means a total area of about 1,000 acres in Oxford, if the city is stabilized at a population of 90,000, as this plan suggests it should be.

(b) *Main Reservations*

It would be tedious to describe all the areas in the city which it is suggested should be kept open for public enjoyment. They can best be studied on a map: the diagram on p. 166 and the folding map at the end of the book show the *main* areas. Among them are: the addition of two areas to the already great bulk (some 400 acres) of Port Meadow; the reservation of a wide strip along each bank of the Cherwell as far out as Water Eaton; the acquisition and improvement of areas adjacent to the Thames to make a solid bulk of public and university space right down the river to beyond Free Ferry Bridge and a wide public strip on each bank

beyond this; the public acquisition of Headington Hill Hall park; and the establishment, when the existing slums are cleared, of open parkland between the Cherwell and St. Clement's Street, from Magdalen Bridge out to St. Clement's Church. As for the rest, all that need be said is that, big and little, neighbourhood open spaces, city open spaces, parks and playing-fields, they should, as far as possible, be linked by tree-bordered grass-edged paths into a complete system devised so that continuous walks, away from roads, are possible between various parts of the city, and from the city centre out into the open country. New riverside walks, especially, are necessary. The squalid, meanly narrow, iron-fenced towpath on one side of the Thames is an unworthy means of access to a famous river. There should be generous open riverside walks on both sides of all the main arms of Thames and Cherwell.

§ 3. WORKPLACES

The opinion has already been expressed that the principal existing industrial area of the city, that occupied by the Morris and Pressed Steel Works at Cowley, is situated in quite the best place that could have been chosen for it, even under present conditions. The construction of the new Southern By-pass and the important link road approximately along the line of Roman Way will make it even better for industrial purposes. There can be no doubt that the majority of new factories should be situated here.

If the transfer of the Morris and Pressed Steel Works from Oxford to some other district is effected, the new factories which will take their place in the city's economy must be brought into operation at the time of the transfer. This means that they could not occupy the sites and buildings of those works even if they were capable of adaptation to the new purposes. A well-equipped industrial estate will need to be ready for occupation some time immediately before the evacuation of the old works. The obvious place for it is on the extensive level land adjacent to the present factories, south of Cowley Road.

7

ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE



§ I. ARCHITECTURE

Some of the main changes that are required to correct old and recent ills in Oxford have now been set out. The suggestions that have been put forward constitute a very broad (and very limited) *social* plan; and, in addition to that, a *physical* plan, a plan to direct the physical changes that are necessary to enable the social plan to be achieved. A physical plan is an essential foundation, a necessary piece of ground work, an indispensable basis for sound physical development and redevelopment. Without such a plan it is unlikely that the changes which are bound in any case to come about will produce a city that is well balanced and conveniently disposed. But social balance and convenience are by no means enough. There are other attributes that are as necessary. And of all attributes beauty, or at least seemliness, is among the most important. Especially in a city like Oxford. Here there is old beauty of a remarkable quality that must be preserved. This plan may go some way to secure its preservation. But beauty in the new is no less important. In some ways, indeed, it is immensely more important.

Beauty is hard to come by, and cannot be achieved by mere endeavour alone. We may not have it in us, whatever it is, to create new beauty. Certainly a mere *plan* cannot ensure it. It cannot ensure even the humbler quality of seemliness. It is buildings and the form and disposition of all manner of objects from trees to lamp-posts, from flowers to flagstones, that produce this. Well-doing is at least as necessary as well-planning. Good building is at least as important as good siting. For while it is true that good buildings which are badly sited lose part of their potential whole effect, they nevertheless remain good in themselves. The most perfect ground plan, on the other hand, will be barren of all *visual* good if the buildings put on it are bad or disordered or mean. A good site plan may even make poor buildings look worse than they would on an indifferent plan.

From all of this it is clear that the future appearance of Oxford will depend far more on the work of the architects, the landscapists, the road engineers, and others who operate within the framework of a broad plan than upon the plan itself. All that the plan can do in the visual field is to afford opportunities for good architecture and good landscape by providing good building sites and good *open* sites in good positions. Its success or failure in this will, of course, in a large degree be the measure of its success or failure as a whole.

In many of the drawings which accompany this present plan, and in the models which illustrate it, the necessity of indicating tentative designs for the various buildings has been inescapable. In this matter the planner who is concerned with Civic Design is unfortunate. For if he conventionalizes his new buildings in his sketches and models, he misleads the ordinary people whom he is trying to help to understand his plan. And if, on the other hand, he tries to give them an appearance of reality, or even of merely impressionistic truthfulness, then he lays himself open to attack from critics on account of something which he has not attempted to do, and which indeed no individual could do in under a lifetime's work, namely, design in detail all the new buildings which the city will require in the next fifty years. That dilemma's horns he cannot avoid. But to anyone who studies a plan to appreciate what it proposes, and not merely to ride his architectural hobby-horses, it should be clear that the sketches which a planner provides, and certainly those which are provided to illustrate this plan, do not in any way attempt to set out final designs for any of the buildings which are suggested in it.

Not only is it impossible to design all a city's new buildings in drawing up a plan, it is, as well, undesirable for a planner, or a Committee, or anyone at all, to attempt to lay down definite rules in the matter. Architecture is an art. It cannot be strait-jacketed by rules. The architect must be allowed proper freedom in which to practise his art (though because architecture is the most social of all the arts, and because its techniques are themselves more scientific, his disciplines are inevitably more restrictive than those under which other artists practise). Nevertheless, in spite of this, and because of the social nature of architecture, it may be proper to suggest certain broad principles which will need to be observed if the character of the city is to be maintained. Some such principles have already been suggested in these pages in the observations that have been made as to the desirability of maintaining the contrasts, the foils, between large-unit and small-unit buildings, and of maintaining some degree of intricacy, and avoiding undue monumentality, in and about the historical centre of the city. There are, in addition, certain other matters which may properly (though very briefly) be touched on here.

the college barges on the Thames make an extremely

gay and attractive picture (though they would look more attractive still if there was room to spread them a little, with spaces between them, instead of making almost a street of them, as now). They are being replaced by brick buildings on the banks—heavy red brick buildings that are anything but gay and attractive. The view opposite shows Christ Church Meadow and the trees of Broad Walk as well as a couple of barges; and, beyond, among other buildings, the tower of Merton chapel and the dome of the Radcliffe Camera.

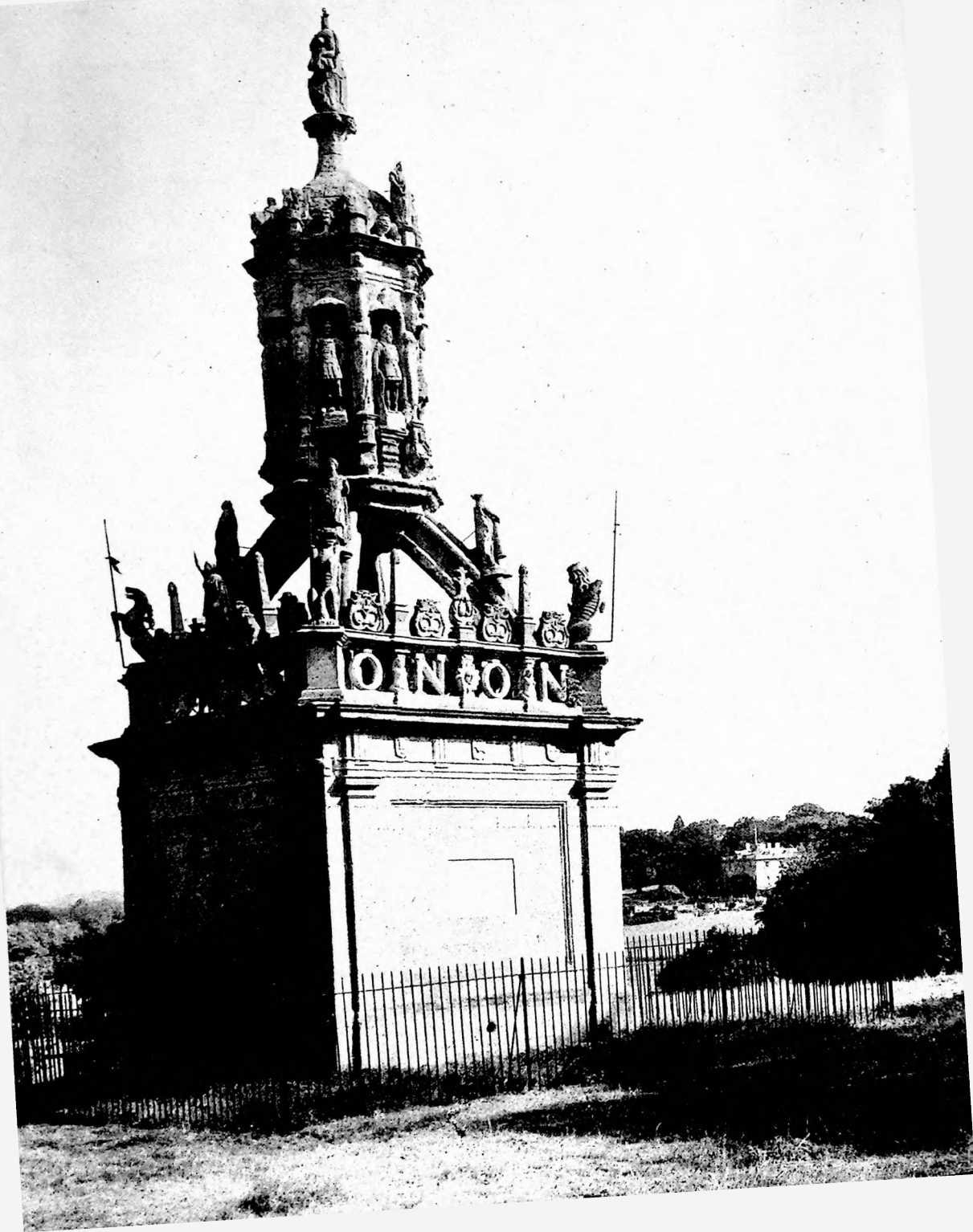
The question of the choice of building materials in new work, especially in the city centre, is certainly one of these.¹ Almost all the existing large buildings in the historical city (whether ecclesiastical, collegiate, civic, domestic, or commercial) are of stone: and most of the remainder are finished in colour-washed plaster or stucco. No other city centre in Great Britain (not even Bath's) is so much all-of-a-piece as this central part of Oxford. It is this striking unity that makes it essential that future work should be harmonious with the old—it being understood, of course, that harmony does not lie in an imitation of 'style', but rather the choice of material and in scale.

Stone is not a material which is much used nowadays for building—except for monumental effect; and that is not wanted in Oxford. So in most old cities (which, in any case, are built of a variety of materials) it would be unsound to require its use in all new buildings, especially since brick and other materials are obtainable in a range of colour which will satisfy the demands of almost any situation. Nevertheless, in Oxford's very special case, the very special measure of insisting on the use of stone or stucco or some similar finish for the external faces of buildings in the central area will be entirely justified.

It is not merely a matter of using stone for its colour, though the exquisite colouring of Oxford's buildings is one of the most important constituents of its beauty. It is not merely a matter of using stone, but of using it in a particular way. Most of the recent buildings for the University and the colleges show this only too well. For some strange reason, all the buildings of the last few decades have been faced in the rustic rubble of Cotswold village building—a kind of stonework which had not been used in Oxford since medieval times until Jackson used it in his new Brasenose buildings on High Street towards the end of last century. The great New Bodleian, Merton's new prison-heavy houses in Rose Lane, the extension to the University Museum, the new buildings for St. Catherine's and St. Anne's—they are all built in 'romantic' rubble. It is difficult to conceive why. But so established has this fashion become that it is now regarded as tradition itself, and the great new 60-foot high Telephone Exchange which it is proposed to build in St. Aldate's is specially designed to be faced in this material out of a sincere, though utterly mistaken, regard for Oxford's architectural traditions. All this is one of the curiosities of modern architectural blindness. For Oxford is essentially an *ashlar* city. One of its great qualities is its urbanity: and this urbanity is largely achieved through its urbane, not rustic, use of its building material. The traditionalists who use rustic rubble instead of urbane ashlar are not only working with inexplicable blindness against the very tradition which they think they are supporting, they are

¹ The centre for this purpose being the area between Magdalen Bridge, Hythe Bridge, Folly Bridge, and the north end of St. Giles.





Carfax Conduit was removed from Carfax for traffic

reasons as long ago as 1795, and now stands in the park of Nuneham Courtenay. It is proposed, in this plan, to bring it back to the city and stand it in the square called New Carfax, 150 yards west of its old position. If the proposals made here solve Oxford's traffic problems after 150 years, that would be a pretty piece of commemoration.

doing as much damage to the true character of the city as commerce's own iconoclasts.

Rubble and ashlar produce quite different colour from the same stone. Rubble, in any case, has an unsuitable texture for modern urban conditions since its rough surface gathers dust and dirt which the smoother surface of ashlar does not hold. But there is more to it than that. With its small-sized wider-jointed units rubble produces a different scale, as well as a different character, from that produced by ashlar. It does so in exactly the same way as brick. Indeed, since brick can be got in colours which hardly differ from that of stone, the objections to the use of rubble in central Oxford are much the same as the objections to the use of brick. The building surfaces which will best harmonize with Oxford's historical character are of the broadly finished rather than the minutely built-up kind. And this, though it may bar the external use of rubble and brick, is by no means unduly restrictive in the use of modern materials, or the use of old materials adapted to modern methods of construction. Thus concrete, always provided it can be given a better surface finish and better colour than we have hitherto generally managed to give it in England, may perhaps be used suitably. A plaster or stucco finish to almost any material almost certainly can be. And probably best of all, for the larger buildings at any rate, may be a covering of thin carefully finished slabs of concrete or reconstructed stone used as a 'skin' to cover raw constructional surfaces—a true modern counterpart of traditional ashlar.

Along with this matter of a harmonious building material, the proper regulation of building heights is of first-rate importance in the preservation of the city's character. Though it would clearly be wrong to stop the addition of new features to the famous sky-line, every building which it is proposed to raise above the general level will need to be considered with the closest scrutiny for unexpected effects.

Certainly nothing lumpish should be added to the delicate interplay of spire and tower and dome. Generally the ordinary building heights should not be more than four stories in Cornmarket Street, High Street, and the proposed street which has been called *Frewin Street*: and not more than three stories elsewhere in the historical city. But it would be dangerous to lay down any broad regulations of this kind and leave it at that, for the important thing is not so much height above street level as height in relation to other buildings whose bases may be higher or lower according to their height above a common *datum*—and, of course, as well as this, in relation to possible effect on some particular view, whether existing or intended. Any height zoning which may be attempted in central Oxford will have to be based on a far more detailed study of contours and viewpoints than has been possible in this present plan; and the effect of any serious departure from present heights will need to be carefully studied on contoured models before approval is given to a project proposing it.

trees are an essential constituent in the urban landscape.

Some parts of Oxford (in particular North Oxford) are exceptionally rich in this respect. Parks Road (opposite, above) is a good example. Indeed the inner parts of North Oxford are saved by their trees: their arid and gloomy Victorian-Gothic villas are mercifully hidden for most of the year and at least veiled for the rest. Thus the Banbury Road, with the great trees in the gardens fronting it, looks like a two-mile-long drive through a forest: without its trees it would be two miles of architectural nightmare. All of which means that these trees should be specially cherished. But a wave of tree-logging amounting to tree-murder has lately come upon the city: an example at the junction of Banbury Road and Norham Gardens (opposite below) shows the brutality of it. The English were once regarded as a nation of tree-lovers. It would now seem that they have become tree-haters. There are few other countries where this kind of thing could happen in this degree. Unless the senseless devastation that is going on is stopped, Oxford streets are likely to be furnished with totem-poles rather than trees in the near future. While the need is for tree-preservation in North Oxford it is for tree-planting in other suburbs.

Among a host of other matters of varying importance which will need to be attended to if the city's architectural character is to be preserved, only one more can be mentioned here—the architecture of pleasure and recreation. This surely should be as light-hearted and as gay as imagination can make it. From the look of its buildings on the riverside and in playing-fields, Oxford's pleasures would seem to be excessively gloomy and heavy ones. Ponderous brick boat-houses as sombre as an undertaker's workshop: cricket pavilions as sad as last week's suet pudding: bathing-places wrapped round with corrugated iron like a forgotten army dump—how forbidding and wretched they all look! It is a mystery why they should be so. They should be bright, light, graceful, the very symbols of pleasure. And it is not as though there are no prototypes—the barges which are being displaced by the undertaker's workshops are perfect in their elegance and playfulness. And it is not merely a matter of lightness and playfulness for its own sake and in its own place—though that would be justification enough. For here the contrast between the larger and more noble buildings of the central city and these small gay pavilions of pleasure would, like other foiling contrasts, add immensely to the interest and liveliness of the Oxford urban scene.

§ 2. LANDSCAPE

Buildings are but one part of the many constituents which together produce the urban landscape.

The effect they produce in that landscape depends not only on their individual appearance and on their relationship to each other but on their relationship to the other constituents in the scene. And the importance of the effect does not necessarily depend on, and is not proportionate to, the total size and hierarchical importance of the constituents that are involved. The supreme importance of one miraculously sited single-standing tree in the whole panorama of High Street has already been mentioned. That is an inspiring example of a single object, and one which is not intrinsically special of its kind, contributing in an immeasurable degree to a total effect in which the main constituents are both far larger and more numerous than itself, and are in themselves among the noblest of their kind.

In the same way, even so apparently trivial a matter as the paving of the roads adjoining buildings may have a very marked effect on the success of the scene as





the little footbridge over the Cherwell in University

Parks is one of the few really elegant things that have been built in Oxford during the last century. It has the lightness and gayness that should be aimed at in future buildings along the sides of the many waterways about the city. The dull and heavy new boat houses that are now replacing the college barges, and the depressing sports pavilions on college playing fields, have none of the playfulness that should be associated with the architecture of leisure. Here elegance and even a touch of fantasy would make an excellent and desirable foil for the bigger and more serious buildings in the city centre.

a whole. This also is illustrated in High Street (as it is in Broad Street and all the lanes and by-streets in the collegiate quarter). High Street has, undoubtedly, lost some quality since the whole of its width was asphalted and flagged (and, to make the point clearer, it would of course lose much more if its pavements were, for example, stripped of their flags and laid as ribbons of continuous concrete). The ashlar of its buildings and the unbroken smoothness of its paved surfaces are too nearly equal in texture and extent. As a result the buildings seem to lack base; and there is a suggestion of dustiness and aridity about the wider part of the street. The smooth paving of the greatest possible width of roadway has, of course, been made necessary by the amount of traffic which now traverses High Street. But when this traffic is substantially reduced, as it should be when Merton Mall is completed, then the width of these paved surfaces may also be reduced; and in the wide middle part at least, since there are no shops there that require smooth pavements in front of their windows, a 2- or 3-foot wide strip of cobbles or setts at the base of the buildings (but not of such width as would produce parallel kerbs down the whole length of the street, for a slight swelling of the carriageway is desirable for appearance's sake on the slow curve of the road) would produce a quite considerable transformation in the scene.

These two matters are mentioned only as examples of the apparently small considerations of detail which play an important part in the success of urban landscape. An example of the need for *large-scale* design occurs in that distressed part of the city, the Thames riverside. The meanness and shabbiness of the landscape there has already been referred to. But it is not merely that the scene itself is untidy. *It has no proper relation to the city.* Both its present disorder and its inherent possibilities can best be appreciated in the northward view from the crown of Free Ferry Bridge. The near-valley floor is cut about in restless shapes by heavily gapped lines of willow stumps; to the east is the nakedly indecent exposure of Iffley Road backs; and what should be the crown and glory of the view, namely, the spires and domes and towers of the city, is ingloriously shut out by one of the most mistaken pieces of planting ever undertaken—that of the brush-bristle row of lombardy poplars along the New Cut. Yet this view, and the view all along the tow-path, with willows and poplars removed and a simple open parkland landscape created, with Iffley Road backs decently clothed by a girdle of trees, could be made a sheer enchantment. The enchantment cries out to be created. Oxford cannot be regarded as truly civilized until this work is done: and, indeed, until the city has in all places come to a similar happy relationship to its surrounding country-side.

§ 3. CONCLUSION

Here, then, in all these arguments and proposals which have now been outlined, is a plan to shape and direct the future of Oxford. It is a plan to preserve old beauty and to make new beauty possible; to add new convenience; to achieve, for the first time in the history of the city, a social balance and a functional equilibrium. If the proposals contained here are in the main acceptable, the fatal hesitations and indecisions of the last fifty years may at last be brought to an end. If they are not acceptable, then new plans must quickly be determined. It is now for the citizens of Oxford, and for all those who love the city and have its future at heart, to decide what shall be done. The city is their charge. Theirs is the responsibility for its future.

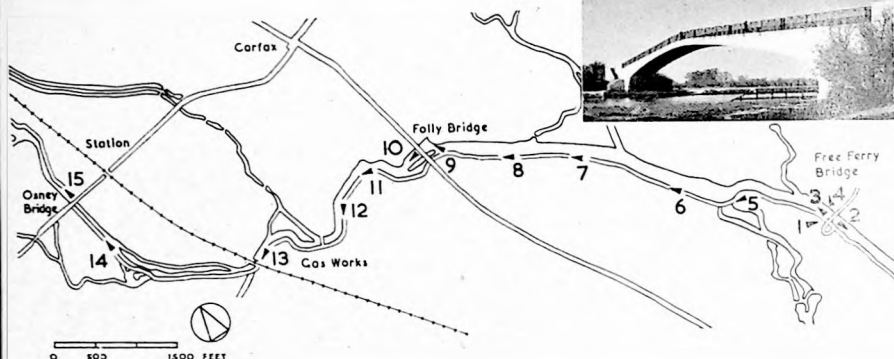
TAILPIECE

This book began with some notes and a number of pictures dealing with the appearance of Oxford. Here, at the end, we return to the same theme. In the pages between suggestions have been made of how Oxford should be planned. It would, however, be a grave mistake to assume that a mere plan will ensure the good looks of the future city. A good plan is a good basis, an essential foundation, for good BUILDING and good MAKING. But at each stage of the plan's realization skilled attention must be given to the details of the work that is being done—the kind of skilled attention that people give to things they are fond of; as, for instance, gardens; or even clothes. Planning is not a substitute for making. It is only the first stage towards making. And the best plan in the world will fail if the work undertaken in carrying it out is not itself well done. In these last pages let us look again at some of the things that have been done to Oxford in the past—some that have been done well and some that have been done badly: some of the very small things as well as some of the big ones.

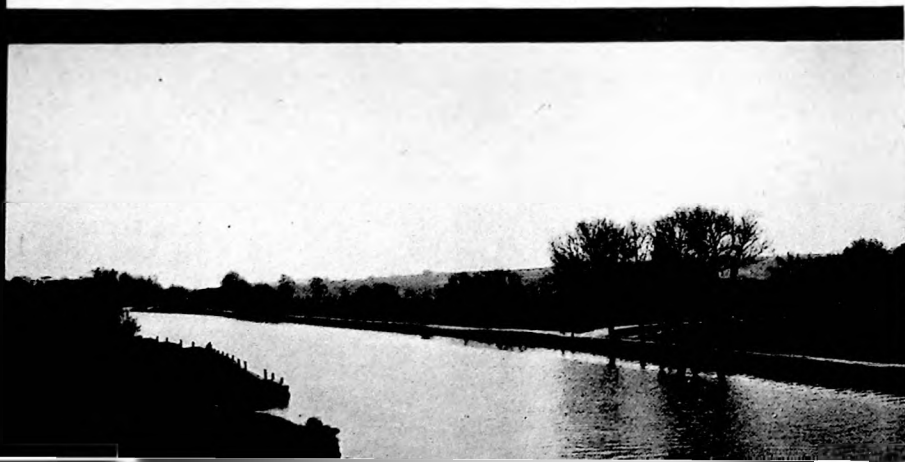
A lost view of Oxford—from the site of the gasworks



THE RIVER: A RAKE'S PROGRESS



First let us look at the river, the famous Thames or Isis, and see what Oxford has done to its most valuable natural possession. The map above shows our viewpoints. We begin at Free Ferry Bridge, 1, looking downstream towards Iffley. In spite of its rather 'arty' railings, this is one of the few really handsome things that have been built in Oxford for nearly a hundred years past. The view from the bridge looking down towards Iffley Lock and out to the country, 2, is of pleasant, ordinary, orderly valley scenery (providing one turns one's eyes away from the big corrugated iron building below the bridge on the left-hand side of the photograph). The view, 3, looking the other way, upstream, is less good. If one keeps one's eyes to the left and raises one's right arm to shut out the view on that side, one gets a view of the river flowing down from Oxford's dreaming spires, through rather scruffy fields broken into restless shapes by lines of pollarded willows. The dreaming spires, however, are hardly to be seen: for a line of lombardy poplars thoughtlessly planted along the New Cut almost completely shuts them out. But if one doesn't exercise that precaution with one's right arm, and takes in the full view, 4, squalor is added to untidiness; and the shock of positive ugliness is added to mere disappointment in a scene which doesn't live up to its possibilities. For the left bank is a medley of shoddy little houses (the photograph doesn't, of course, show their violent colours) seen beyond scrub fields and tumbledown sheds. Coming down from the bridge and walking northwards along the 8-ft. wide tow-path on the right bank, 5, (for the public has no access to the left bank) barbed-wire fencing keeps one out of the adjoining fields—till one comes





3



4





6



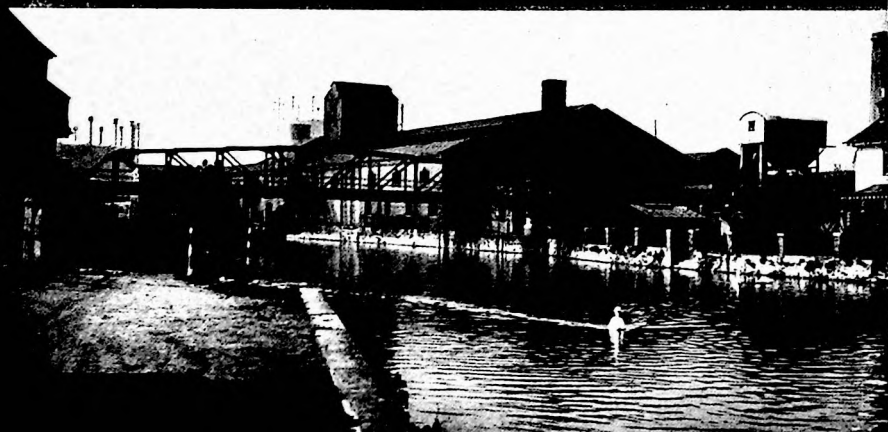
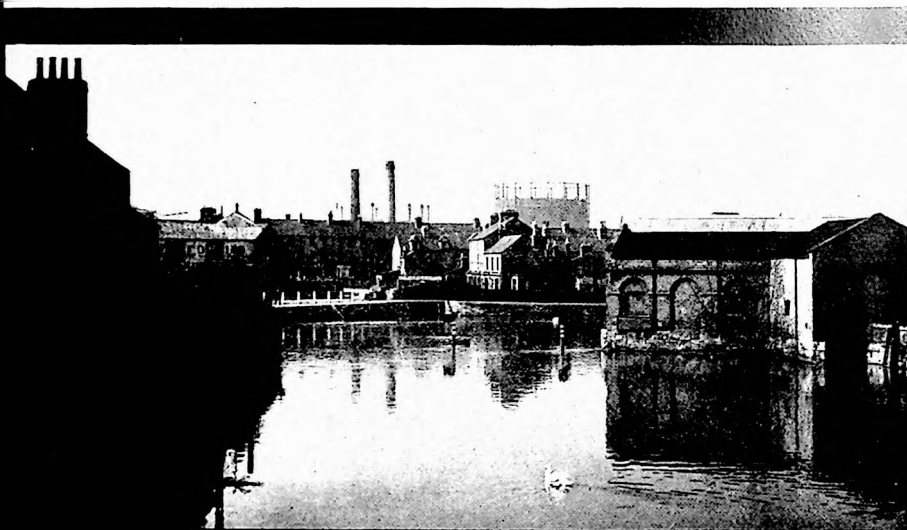
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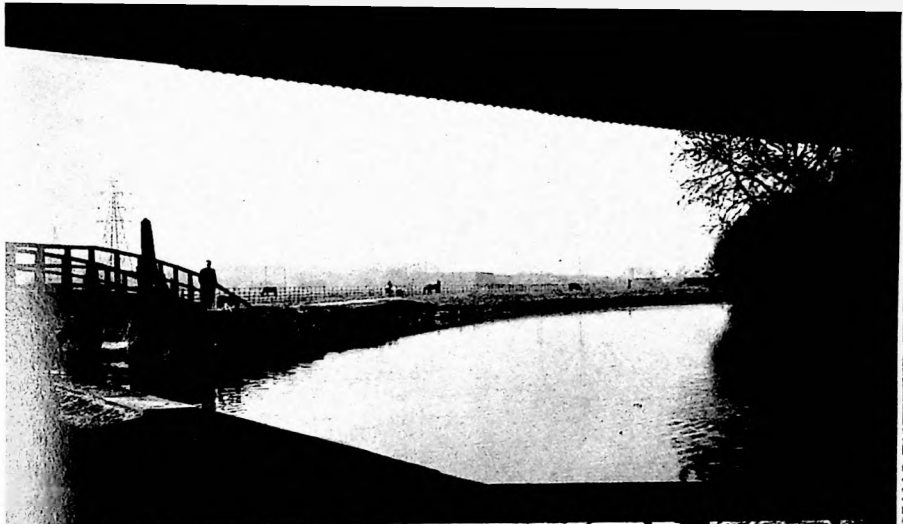
to the bathing-place, 6. Not that anyone would know that it is a bathing-place if there weren't a notice to that effect. Behind its corrugated-iron stockade it might equally well be an old car dump. Beyond the bathing-place the adjoining fields are defended from the tow-path by another kind of railing, 7, this one tidier but much more forbidding. On the left bank the new brick boat-houses, looking rather like small factories on the Great West Road as it runs out of London, come into sight; and beyond them the old college barges which they are replacing. Eventually, opposite the barges which line the Christ Church bank, one comes across a length of tow-path which is unrailled, 8. Or one recently did; for a week or two after this photograph was taken, in mid-1946, this last open stretch too was railled—this with chestnut palings, for variety's sake. Not that any damage had hitherto been done to the college playing-field on the other side: the trees and bushes indicated well enough to most people that they shouldn't go beyond them; and they didn't. Still, this was private property, college property, so it had to be railled in. A little farther on, 9, approaching Folly Bridge now, there is still another kind of fencing: hurdles this time. The river bank looks bad here, but it has been much the same most of the way along. Still, this is by far the best reach of the river. With the great trees of Christ Church Meadow, the barges, the college playing-fields, Oxford people could enjoy beauty here—if it weren't so obvious from the meanly narrow tow-path, and the railings, that they are begrudged it. Now we have arrived at Folly Bridge, 10, Oxford's only bridge over the single-channelled Thames (the river divides into several arms where the



western approach comes in). The scene on the downstream of the bridge is lively if not orderly. But on the upstream side, 11, it is neither lively nor orderly. This looks a different kind of river. Instead of Thames or Isis it might be the river of a northern industrial town. Going on through the gas works, 12, for nearly half a mile (Is this Oxford, or Rotherham, or Wolverhampton, or Blackburn? Who could say?) we came out, under the cavernous railway-bridge, 13, to fields again at last. The fields are criss-crossed by a network of electricity pylons and cables, and a great transmission station stands nakedly in their midst: but still, they are fields and not gas works. After a field or two, for a little while, buildings (including the electricity power station) again line the banks, 14, as we came to Osney Bridge which carries the Botley Road across the river. Beyond Osney Bridge, 15, walking along the bank, we should have to pass by allotment gardens and railway sidings before we left the Oxford river curse behind us in the elemental levels of Port Meadow. But we have already come far enough to appreciate what Oxford thinks of its river. We have indeed come two miles: two miles of squalor and indignity. And in all that two miles, there have been five seats and no grass on which Oxford citizens and Oxford scholars may sit and view what has been done in their name—but not in their interest. But perhaps it is no wonder that no sitting space should be provided here. For what should be a joy has been turned to a vexation of spirit. Thames or Isis runs through Oxford: but it has been treated like a ditch running past the end of a backyard.



13



14

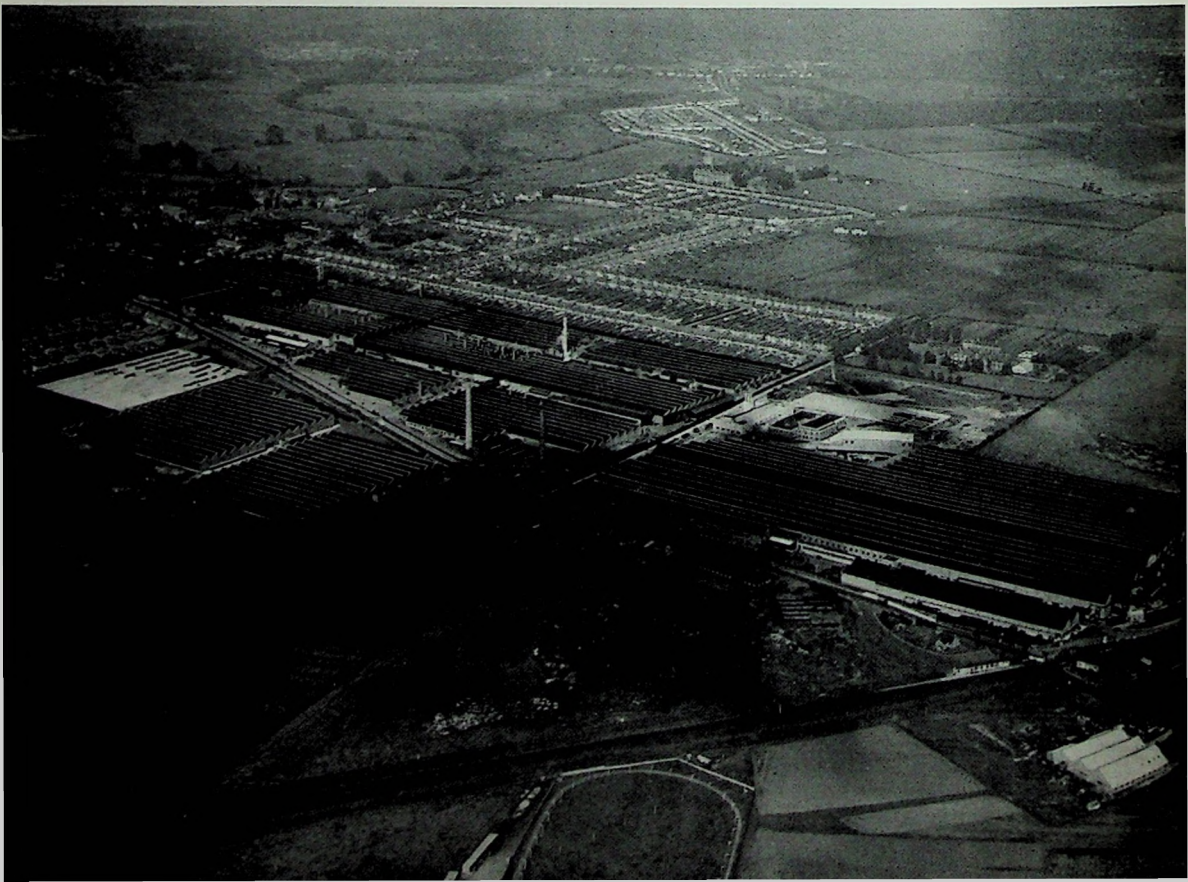




ENVIRONS AND APPROACHES

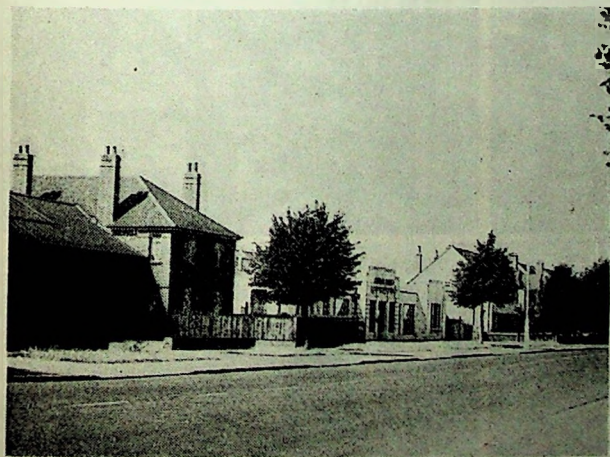
The superb de Wint picture (opposite) points the moral of the previous pages. Here, instead of the accelerating degeneration of the rake's progress, we have a mounting nobility as the coach runs through clear undefiled country right up to the sheer city. This is as it should be. Until the end of the eighteenth century the approach to a city was one of the dramatic moments of everyday life. Environs did not mean a half-world of suburbia, a kind of twilight between town and country, as they do now. From this coach practical people saw the towers and steeples rising above the environment of fields and woods: and they could not but feel uplifted at the sight. To-day, entering the city on the same road, they see the view in the photograph below the de Wint—semi-detached villas, petrol-pumps, hoardings, shacks, dumps. Both views are of the Botley Road. Fortunately on this entrance to the city something of the old character can be regained: in this plan a new road

Cowley Works





Is proposed here with open country all along one side and the towers and spires in front. But that cannot happen on other approaches. The most we can generally do now is to try to tidy up the mess—and stop any more of it happening in future.



Botley Road.

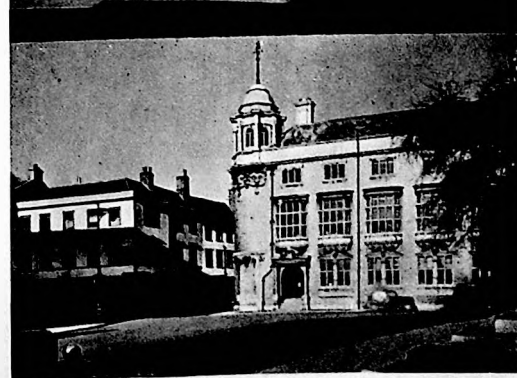
LOWLY—



It is sometimes argued that the buildings which are put up to-day do not offer the same opportunities for creating telling effects as did the buildings of the past: that those who built cathedrals and colleges had a different objective from us to-day who fly no higher than providing utilities and services—housing, factories, petrol-pumps, wide roads, and the like; which, the argument runs, do not lend themselves to civic design and the higher kind of architecture. The answer to that is an appeal to history. Though our ancestors did build cathedrals and colleges they built other things as well. Then, as now, most of the time of most of the citizens, and most of the space in most of the cities, was spent on providing what (in our coupon jargon) may be described as the 'utility furniture' of the town. It is not so much the opportunity as the art (and the outlook that produced the art) that has been lost. Our ancestors held some secret by which their vernacular life was rich as well as crowded. In architecture its highest moments came when it impinged on the monumental life of the city. Then there came about those moving juxtapositions of lowly and lofty, of 'utility' and 'luxury,' whose contrasts are the very heart of the urban idea as it is understood in the English tradition—the spire soaring above the craftsman's shop, the college next to the cottage—any of the scenes shown on this page and some which are shown in other parts of this book.



Four views of Broad Street. The dates are, from top to bottom, 1814, 1817, and two of the present day.



AND LOFTY

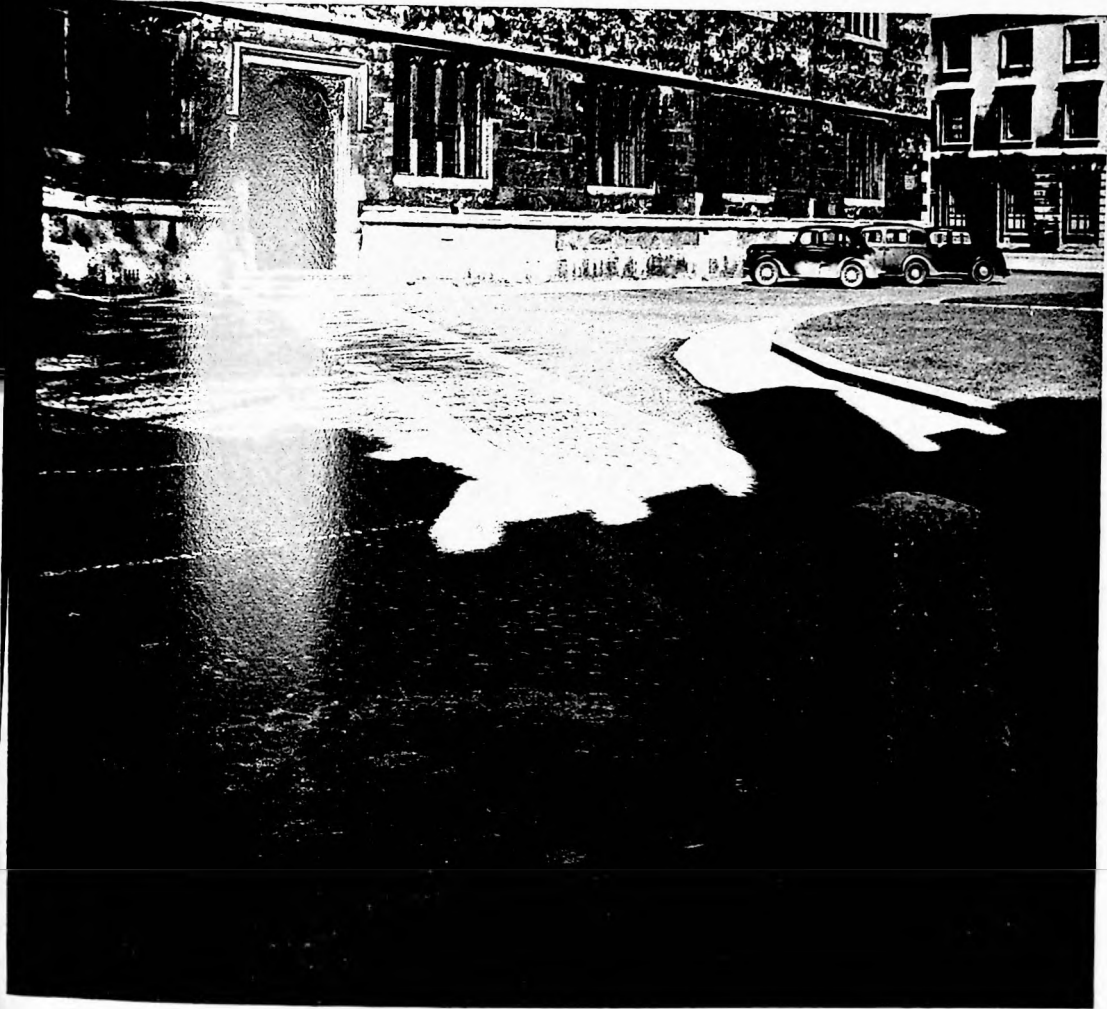
Oxford, by virtue of its function, is, of course, rich beyond most other cities in what (to continue the analogy) we may call 'luxury furniture'. There is hardly a street in the central parts but is furnished with some richness by a special building of some kind. Pleasant as this is for the enthusiast for architecture, it provides a temptation which the planner must resist, for if he allowed such monumentality to go to his head he might easily find himself trying to do a Haussmann on Oxford.¹ Historically the English tradition is diametrically opposed to the French. Ours is the Informal rather than the Grand Manner. And it is particularly shown in Oxford. To try to exploit the monumental possibilities of this city, straightening and widening the streets, liquidating its odd corners, making great groupings of the many large new buildings that must be built, would be to commit the kind of surgery which is indistinguishable from murder. An example of what not to do occurs at the eastern end of Broad Street. Here the Clarendon group of buildings was built in close and effective visual contact with medieval buildings. Notice, in the print of 1814, how a gabled house acted as an admirable foil for the Clarendon. The Indian Institute which took its place is not admirable nor is it a foil, adding as it does a monumental pile which tries to compete with the Clarendon. The New Bodleian (for which a charming group of old houses was pulled down) added another. And now this end of Broad Street has become a pseudo-monumental mass of masonry. Only the

¹ Haussmann was the man who turned Paris into a set of triumphal avenues.

King's Arms and Blackwell's bookshop remain to liven the scene by contrast, and to teach the busts of the Sheldonian how to puff out their chests to the best advantage. All of which brings us back to the matter of Foils. That has already been spoken of, but in Oxford it cannot be spoken of too often.



Wall of the Sheldonian forecourt with The King's Arms beyond.



Radcliffe Square

TRIVIA

One of the greatest visual errors we make in looking at a town is in limiting our perception by deliberately excluding from consciousness whole categories of visible objects. It is possibly a piece of aesthetic defence-mechanism. The result, however, is to confine the discussion of architecture and planning to elephantine matters such as buildings and traffic routes, and to elephantine platitudes about vistas and focal points. The trivia, the visual animalcula, slip through the mesh of the sieve. Yet these trivia—curbs, bollards, road surface patterns—form a large part of any scene. Until quite recently, for instance, buildings were designed to be seen against a base of cobblestones; and in Oxford, although cobbles still exist in corners, the aesthetic loss we have sustained in substituting tarmac is very great. There is a subconscious natural human prejudice against jointing, which makes, as between two buildings, the less jointed article—that is, the object built up of bigger units—the more important. Thus stone seems more important than brick. And thus tarmac has introduced into the urban scene a false



Studies in detail: the same base and the same corner bollard seen against tarmac and against cobbles. Above: Merton Street west of Magpie Lane. Opposite: Merton Street east of Magpie Lane.

quantity by which the street, the floor, the support for buildings, has taken on itself not only a jointless skin of great magnificence (though of a horrible colour) which humbles the effort of even large stones to look important, but also an excessive smoothness. Tarmac omits to provide an intricate texture (such as cobbles provide) against which the ashlar may appear to be smoother as well as of a bigger unit size. The tarmac out-smoothes the ashlar. The loss of texture attendant on the loss of cobbles and setts is also very serious—and the wider the street the greater is the loss. Of course, drivers of cars, riders of bicycles, and wearers of high-heeled shoes do not like cobbles: they are a material that is not suitable for paving surfaces that are much used. Granite setts are less objectionable because they are less uneven, though they lack the attractive texture of cobbles because of the regularity of their joints. But there are many places where cobbles can create valuable effect without inconvenience—parts of streets that are not much used: verges between carriageway and footway, and between footway and building: the central parts of squares (instead of the invariable English grass): and even the carriageway of quiet and unfrequented streets like Merton Street. The thoughtless tar-spraying and tarmacing of cobbles has gone far to reduce the character of many of Oxford's curious and pleasant side lanes.



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Bath Place. A
study in floor
texture

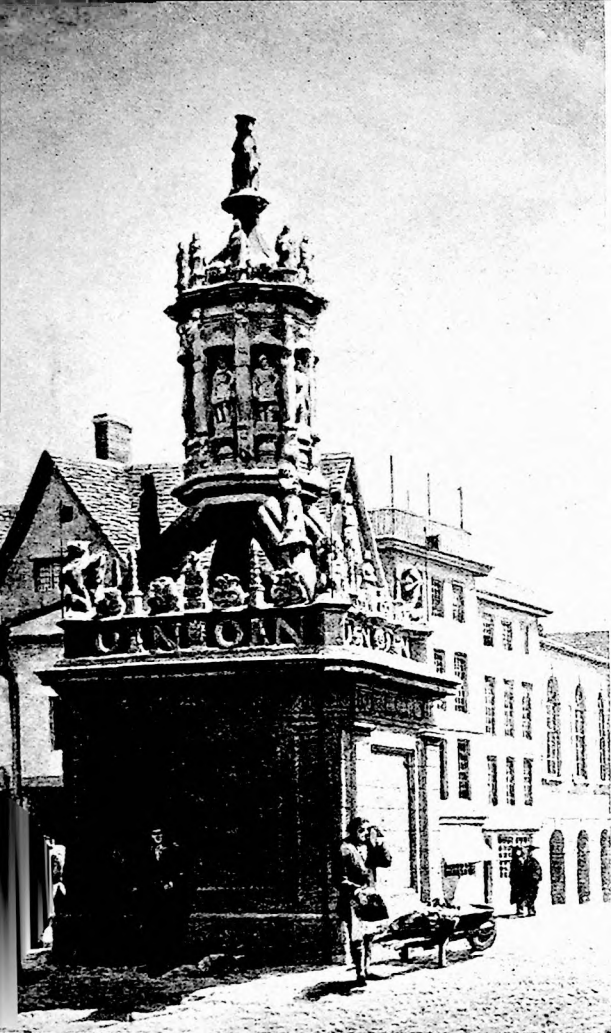
SIGNIFICANT OBJECTS

Once the effort is made to bring into consciousness those components of the picture whose familiarity or triviality usually leads us to overlook them as visual factors, a new world of objects swims into the field of sight of the student of urban landscape. The monument which crowns the park at Nuneham Courtenay (top) is in fact nothing else than the conduit which used to stand at Carfax. The fact that the conduit can act as an eye-catcher in a park, a function it admirably performs, demonstrates what the lower print reveals—that the street consists of a series of significant objects in a background which relates one to the other. Thus the finial of the conduit, the pediment on the old Town Hall in the middle distance, and Tom Tower beyond that, have a scenic relationship to each other. They 'pick up' and 'echo' each other down the street. And lest this series of echoes be too obvious, the strong opposing plane of the building on the right (with its own subtle 'echo' in the pedimented feature which breaks out of and above the bare roof¹) acts as an admirable foil both to the 'echoes' themselves and to the long vanishing perspective of St. Aldate's. This indeed is a perfect piece of street scenery—alas! of it all only Tom Tower and Christ Church buildings remain to-day. The objects in that view of Carfax in 1775 are attractive

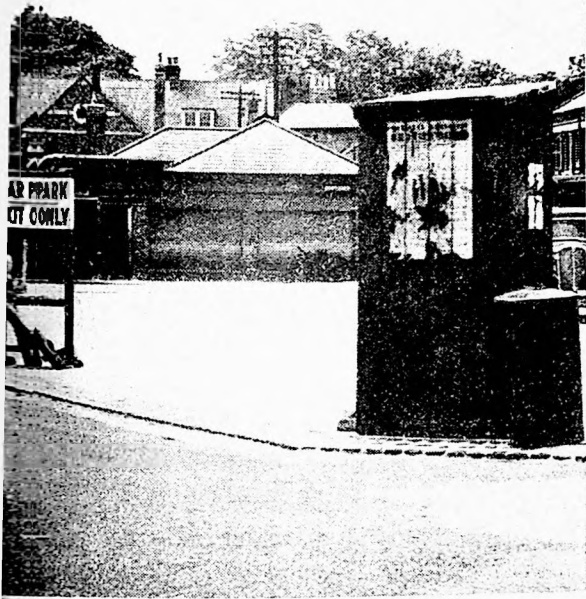
¹ If this feature is obscured with the finger, its importance in the scene will be more fully revealed.



Above: Carfax Conduit in Nuneham Park. Below: the conduit as it was in 1775.



not merely because they are in good taste. They contribute to, rather than detract from, the total effect, because there is a homogeneity of vision which gives significance to detail. In comparison, the ordinary street scene to-day shows no homogeneity. Regard the modern urban accessories. Look at George Street as an example of the big: look at the page opposite for examples of the small. Not one of the objects there—signs, shelter, hoardings, lamp-standards, bridges, railings, dustbins—is unnecessary or illegitimate. Regarded as objects, either individually or collectively, they are both pathetic and terrible—a terrible commentary on contemporary civilization. Let it not be supposed, however, that the cabman's shelter in Broad Street (above) must be rebuilt as a more substantial piece of architecture before it can claim equal credit with the conduit. To each age its methods. Ours are mobile rather than monumental. But, if cabmen must have their shelter in Broad Street, there is no reason why it should not be another object of visual interest in the scene.



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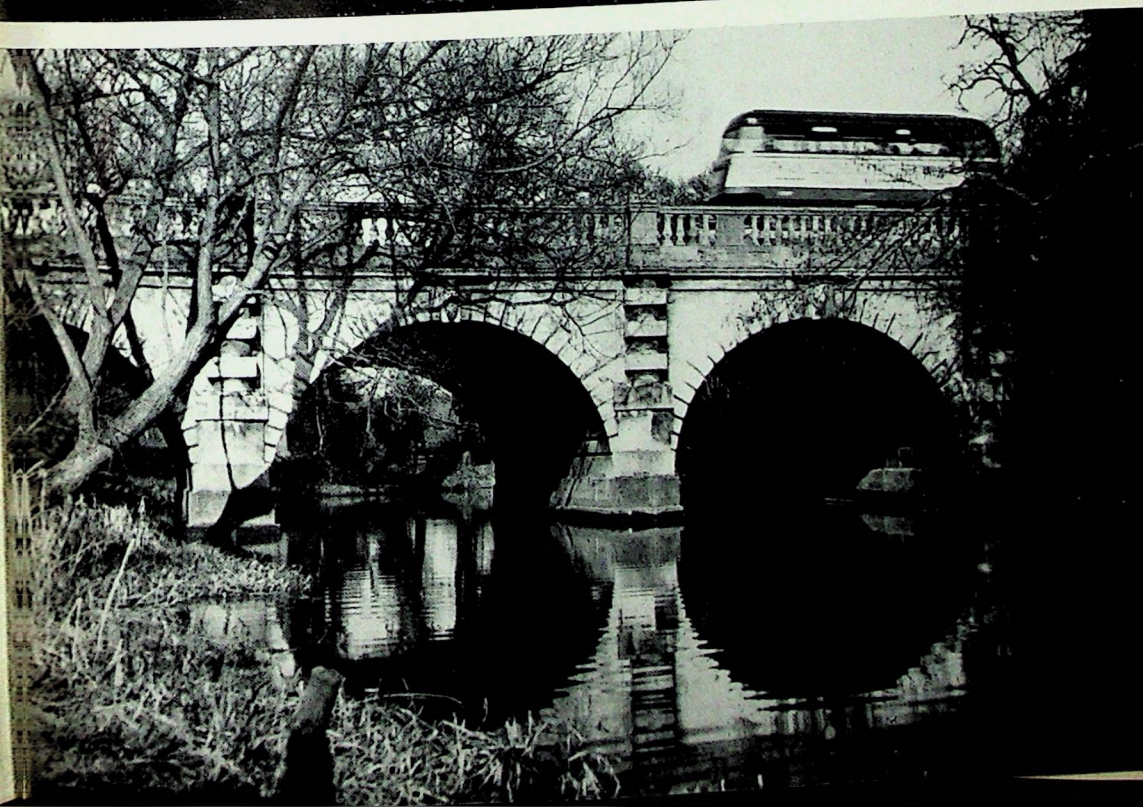
Magdalen tower and bridge, 1797.

TREES

Amongst the most valuable of all urban objects are trees. In this respect Oxford is an object-lesson to all town planners. The tree in the High Street is something of a miracle; but all over the city extraordinary effects and transformations are made by the use of trees. The poplars of Magdalen Bridge,¹ echoing, as they do, the verticality of Magdalen Tower, are an admirable example of how a monumental effect may be enhanced by trees: and the engraving above shows what an important part as objects—as pieces of sculpture—as articles on the mantelpiece, so to speak—trees can play in an architectural scheme. Individually they can provide massive shapes, exotic or geometrical or informal. In the mass they can create, in a limited space, sudden illusions of urban country. The intrusion of a bus into the park-like scene below Magdalen Bridge (opposite, below), for example, merely heightens the dramatic effect since it intensifies the sense of the proximity of the human hive, the busy street, just round the corner. In planting for urban purposes the principle to be observed (though it can of course be broken) is a

¹ They were planted long after this engraving was made.

Opposite, top: Magdalen
Grove. Bottom: Magdalen
Bridge.



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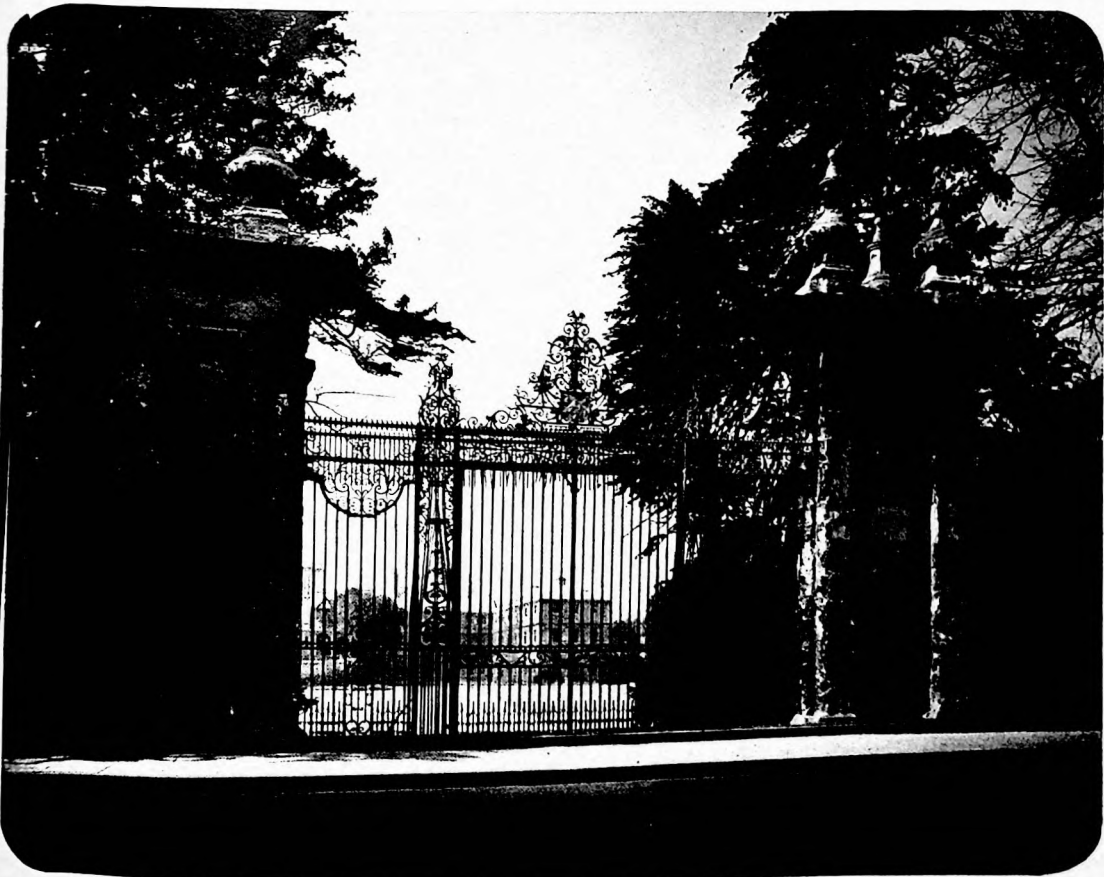
Above: Magdalen Bridge looking towards the Plain. Left: The Plain, from the far end of Magdalen Bridge.

very simple one—ornamental trees should be avoided. And it is neither kind nor sensible suddenly to leave off, as though there were quarters of the town that are not worthy of the trouble of planting. An extraordinary case of this is to be found at the east end of Magdalen Bridge, where, if you travel literally a yard too far (see above), you are transported from a world which is beautiful to one that seems vile beyond hope of redemption. In fact the yard too far is less a progress in space from one part of Oxford to another than a trip through time, a trip from the Renaissance to the New Dark Age—even though the pub on the corner is called the Cape of Good Hope.

SCALE

There would be little hope for us if we were still creating for ourselves the kind of environment typified by the Cowley Road (opposite): but there are signs that the New Dark Age is passing. The demand for town planning is one of the signs. Another is the newly re-found ability to treat works of utility as potential works of art. Oxford is almost unique amongst English cities for the general largeness, indeed grandeur, of its scale, a tradition which even entered into the laying out of suburban North Oxford—where, as a matter of fact, it was misplaced (over-page: middle). Long lost, this sense of scale is slowly returning not only to the so-called artist but to the technician. The road engineer, for example. The sweep of the new Northern By-pass (over-page: bottom), with its pleasant landscaping, is in something of the grand manner even though it is informal; and it is well able to stand comparison with the historic scale of central Oxford.

Scale: Trinity Gates.





Top: A housing estate.
Middle: North Oxford.
Bottom: Oxford Northern
By-pass.



High Street

INTRICACY

But, as it has already been suggested, the scale of the Grand Manner becomes tedious when it is imposed without good reason. By English standards the perfect street scene will ring the changes on scale. Thus (above) the noble portico of All Saints counters the intricate domesticities of the Mitre, each building admirably expressing the kind of spirit in which it requires to be approached. As a group they emphasize the variety and richness of urban life, the one complementing the other in a spiritual as well as an architectural sense. When intricacy is missing from a street most people are aware of it at once, without knowing what it is they miss. It is, of course, the expression, which we expect to find in a city, representing the complex and independent activities of many independent people; and it is the town planner's business to see that it is given the chance to arrive, without creating either social or visual havoc. For the modern architect this represents one of the most difficult problems, for while achieving an extraordinary unity of idiom over the world as a whole, modern architecture has not yet succeeded in finding the power of local variation by which it might look to express personal as well as collective requirements. In a word it has not achieved intricacy. This will come. It is worth remembering that the eighteenth-century designers, no whit less austere than the modern, had the same problem, but achieved its solution in such buildings as those that act as foils to the Collegiate Gothic of Oxford's High Street.

SILHOUETTE

Whatever success the eighteenth-century builders achieved in intricacy, it was not enough for the Victorians. Although to-day our sympathies lie with the eighteenth rather than the nineteenth century, it is possible, by an effort of the imagination, to see what it was, for example, in the Georgian skyline (so symptomatic of the Georgian spirit) that produced that particular sense of frustration in the immediate post-Regency architects, and made revolutionaries, indeed anarchists, of people like Butterfield. The revolution, the anarchy, is most significantly illustrated in the print below, where the Randolph bursts like dynamite through the horizontal skyline of Beaumont Street. To the Victorians the straight skyline was, in the words of Harriette Wilson, a dead bore—and in a sense their revolt may be said to have taken place at cornice level. Of course, a proper diversity of skyline is very necessary in a town. The eighteenth-century builders, for all their concern for the street as a unit of design, knew this well enough: and with their church spires and domes they practised the art of diversification, of 'vertical punctuation' in a horizontal composition, with delightful effect. We to-day understand nothing of it, as the unbroken dreariness of our suburban roof lines and the anarchy of our commercial streets show. Nor did the Victorians, for all their revolution. For diversification of silhouette has to be most delicately practised. If anarchy is to be avoided, the right of diversification must be reserved to the more important structures—public and near public buildings. If everyone had the right to do his own bit of diversifying we should get the kind of town they have in most parts of the 'New World'—in the prairie towns of America, for example, where many-storied commercial buildings stand cheek by jowl to one-story shanties in a nightmare of disorder. Diversification is a delightful but a dangerous art: it, too, should be practised with propriety—and according to plan. Though the native may hardly raise his eyes above the shops, Oxford is, in fact, probably unique in Britain for the propriety of its silhouette: a matter, this, not merely of spire and dome but of gable and roof, of cornice and even chimney. Custom, however, so blinds the eye that for the man in the street (for whom they are in a special sense created) these pleasures seem hardly to exist. A blind man suddenly given sight might see them as they are seen in the negatives (opposite and overleaf), in which the element of surprise helps to reawaken the power of direct vision, and reveals the subtlety and variety of the architectural relationships which may exist in a street.



Above: The Randolph Hotel.
Right: Beaumont Street.





Skyline: Top: High Street (in negative). Middle and bottom: Holywell Street (in negative).

PAVEMENT LEVEL

Buildings can rarely be enjoyed to the full when they are seen dissociated from people. They are built for people: they are lost without people in them and about them. But though human crowds can hardly be too thick and busy about our towns for buildings to be seen properly, their machines can. Standing cars have become as big a nuisance to the appreciation of architecture as the elephants that are repeated to the point of exasperation round the bases of Indian monuments. Oxford's street architecture can nowadays be seen only above a plinth of gleaming internal-combustion machines standing bonnet to bumper. It is time that a revolution was made at pavement-level. This does not mean that we must victimize the motorist by refusing him the use of his car, or, what is worse, so restricting the use of it that it ceases to give its proper service. What it does mean is that we must provide the greatest modern utility with opportunities which permit it to fulfil its mission one hundred per cent. without, however, breaking up the other activities of the social scene. To provide proper car-standing facilities is one of the jobs of a town plan. What we must not do is to requisition the open areas rightfully provided by earlier generations for public enjoyment and divert them to serve as garages for unused cars merely because we are too improvident to provide the necessary facilities.

Oriel Street.





From top to bottom:
Broad Street, St. Aldate's,
Broad Street, Oriel Street.



APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

NOTE. *This list does not suggest any order of priority: it follows the order in which the recommendations occur in the text.*

1. The character of Oxford is a matter of national as well as local concern. The future of the city must be settled in the light of its place in the national economy, and not merely out of a consideration of the internal needs of Oxford alone or out of the desires of the majority of its inhabitants. (p. 73)
2. In the interest both of the city's social well-being and of its historical character, the great Nuffield and the Pressed Steel works should be removed from the city to some other part of the country. (p. 79)
3. New factories, of the right kind, in the right proportion, and in comparatively small units, will need to be brought into the city to employ those workers who do not migrate with the migrating works. (p. 80)
4. The city should at the most grow no bigger than its present population of 100,000 and should preferably decline in size to a population of 90,000 or slightly less. (p. 81)
5. The prime function of the future city should be as a university city and a county and regional capital: but though manufacturing should not be a prime function, there should nevertheless be sufficient well-balanced and well-diversified industry to assure its social health and material well-being. (p. 81)
6. New territorial growth should be by way of consolidation within the present urbanized area rather than any extensive building over of new land. (p. 86)
7. There should be no further building, except for rural purposes, in the country-side immediately around the city. (p. 88)
8. If the building of satellites to Oxford becomes necessary, they should be established at least ten miles away. (p. 88)

9. The system of by-pass roads should be completed by the construction of new links from Botley to Kidlington (p. 100) and from the Abingdon Road Bridge to Wheatley. (p. 100)
10. An improved system of radial roads should be developed by the construction of a new western approach from Botley (p. 104); the use of the Headington Old Road continued round the foot of Shotover to the London Road (p. 104); and the use of the Abingdon Road, through the provision of a new bridge over the Thames near Iffley, to relieve the Iffley Road. (p. 104)
11. A middle ring road should be developed to take cross-town traffic. (p. 110)
12. New inner city roads, to relieve High Street and Cornmarket Street, should be built running from the Plain, alongside Broad Walk, to St. Aldate's: thence, through St. Ebbe's, to the western end of Queen Street: thence through the grounds of Frewin Hall and the University Union to Baker's corner (p. 114). A new road to relieve George Street should be built across Gloucester Green. (p. 116)
13. No bus services should run on High Street, Queen Street, Cornmarket Street, or the upper part of St. Aldate's, excepting a 'shuttle service' along High Street between the Plain and the Stations. Vehicles of over 2 tons should be banned from these streets, and there should be a maximum speed limit of 20 miles per hour upon them. (p. 117)
14. The present railway stations should be rebuilt as one, with a new bus station alongside, the whole constituting a main transport station. (p. 120)
15. Public stands (including two multi-story buildings) should be provided for about 3,300 cars. (p. 127). Car standing should not generally be permitted in the streets between Cornmarket Street and Magdalen Bridge. (p. 127)
16. All flying immediately over the city should be banned. (p. 129)
17. The conception of a development of 'twin cities' of Oxford and Cowley, with the main administrative and shopping centres transferred to Cowley, is unsound and should be dropped. (p. 131)
18. Since the absence of any knowledge of the plans and intentions of the University is a serious obstacle to the proper planning of the city as a whole, the University and the colleges should be required to produce, at an early date, a responsible statement of their needs and intentions. (p. 133)
19. The main zone of University expansion should be west of St. Giles. (p. 135)
20. It is essential that the foil between collegiate and domestic buildings in the historical city should be retained. Ship Street is an example of this foil: the pre-war plans for its demolition should be abandoned, and the street rehabilitated (p. 136). Similarly the proposed demolition by the University of part of Beaumont Street to make room for further extensions to the Ashmolean should be forbidden. (p. 136)
21. The new University Union should be built on the site of the markets. (p. 137)
22. The proposal by Magdalen College to put large new buildings on the site of the Botanic Gardens buildings should be stopped. (p. 137)
23. Monumental planning will be wholly out of character with the historical city, and should be avoided. (p. 138)
24. The development of a single monumental Civic Centre would be a grave mistake; instead, public buildings should be sited singly or in small related groups at salient and suitable points. (p. 138)
25. The new Town Hall and Municipal Offices should be built at the Mac Fisheries corner. (p. 139)
26. The old Conduit, removed from Carfax in 1795, should be brought back to stand in the square in front of the new Town Hall. (p. 140)
27. The new County Council Offices, Municipal College, Law Courts, and City and County Museum should be built along the new western approach to the city centre between Queen Street and Oxpens Road. (p. 140)
28. The new Assembly Halls and City Library and Art Gallery should be built facing the new road across Gloucester Green. (p. 142)
29. The main Health Centre and Youth Centre should be built beyond an open space established eastwards of the Plain. (p. 144)
30. The new streets west of Cornmarket Street and St. Aldate's (see para. 12 above) should become new shopping streets. A shopping arcade should be built between the new street and Cornmarket Street. Cornmarket Street should be made a one-way street (traffic travelling northwards) and its pavements widened. (p. 149)

31. The end portions of George Street should be made into pedestrian promenades. (p. 150)
32. The Market should be moved to a site on the square in front of the new Town Hall. (p. 150)
33. The Cattle Market should be moved to the other side of Oxpens Road. (p. 151)
34. An area near to the stations should be zoned for warehouses. (p. 151)
35. The new Telephone Exchange should not be built as has been intended, between the Police Station and Folly Bridge, but (to a height of three stories) on the west side of the new square below Christ Church. (p. 151)
36. The city should double its hotel capacity in the next few years. New hotels should be built on the east side of St. Aldate's north and south of the river at Folly Bridge. (p. 151)
37. A workshop area should be developed near the stations and (possibly) in the southern part of St. Ebbe's. (p. 152)
38. Extension of the Gas Works on their present site should be prohibited, and the works should be removed altogether to a new site at Cowley. (p. 153)
39. The Electricity Works should be removed to Cowley. (p. 154)
40. Three-storied flats should be built in St. Ebbe's and Jericho. (p. 154)
41. A public footpath and garden strip should be laid out under the Longwall Street section of the city walls. New College should be persuaded to give a right of way along the Slipie so that the outer side of the city walls there can be seen by the public. (p. 155)
42. A green barrier should be established east of Magdalen Bridge. (p. 156)
43. When the property between the Cherwell and St. Clement's Street is pulled down the site should remain open as public riverside gardens. (p. 156)
44. The city outside the centre should be organized into fourteen neighbourhoods, each more or less self-contained for essential everyday services. (p. 165)
45. Many new playing-fields should be provided. (p. 167)
46. A system of *connected* open spaces should be developed between neighbourhoods, running from the city centre out into the open country. (p. 168)
47. The Thames riverside is at present quite unworthy of the city. It should be improved and generous riverside open spaces made available to the public. (p. 168)
48. The city's main industrial area should remain at Cowley. (p. 169)
49. New buildings in the historical city should be faced in ashlar, plaster, stucco, or similar material. The use of stone rubble or brick should be avoided. (p. 172)
50. Careful attention should be given to building heights in the city centre. (p. 175)
51. New tree-planting should be undertaken in the suburbs; and unskilled lopping of trees in public places should be stopped. (p. 176)
52. The riverside areas of the Thames between Christ Church and Iffley should be given an open park-like treatment; unsatisfactory development such as that along the Iffley Road should be screened by planting new trees. (p. 179)

APPENDIX 2

SUGGESTED STAGES IN BUILDING NEW CENTRAL STREETS

Comparatively clear as are the lines proposed for the new central streets, their building will not be a simple matter of starting at one end with a great gang of workmen one Monday morning and driving straight ahead until the work is finished. The destruction of some large buildings is involved, and the work will have to proceed in stages carefully planned so that the city's life is not unduly disturbed. The following order is suggested for the *main* stages:

1. *Merton Mall, Christ Church Square, and East Oxpens.*
2. The southern part of *New St. Ebbe's Street*: shops which will be displaced in St. Ebbe's Street and Queen Street being permanently or temporarily accommodated there.

3. Upper *New St. Ebbe's Street* and *New Carfax*.
4. *New Market*.
5. *New Union* built on site of present Market.
6. *Fretwin Street* as far as *George Street*: a new departmental store for Messrs. Elliston & Cavell being built at the same time on the island site bordered by *New Inn Hall Street* and *St. Michael's Street*.
7. *George Square* and the eastern end of *The Friary* (the western end, over Gloucester Green, can have preceded this).

APPENDIX 3

OXFORD SHOPS: 1946

The map below shows the sub-division of the city for the purpose of a survey made in 1946. The results of the survey are shown in the tables opposite and over-page.

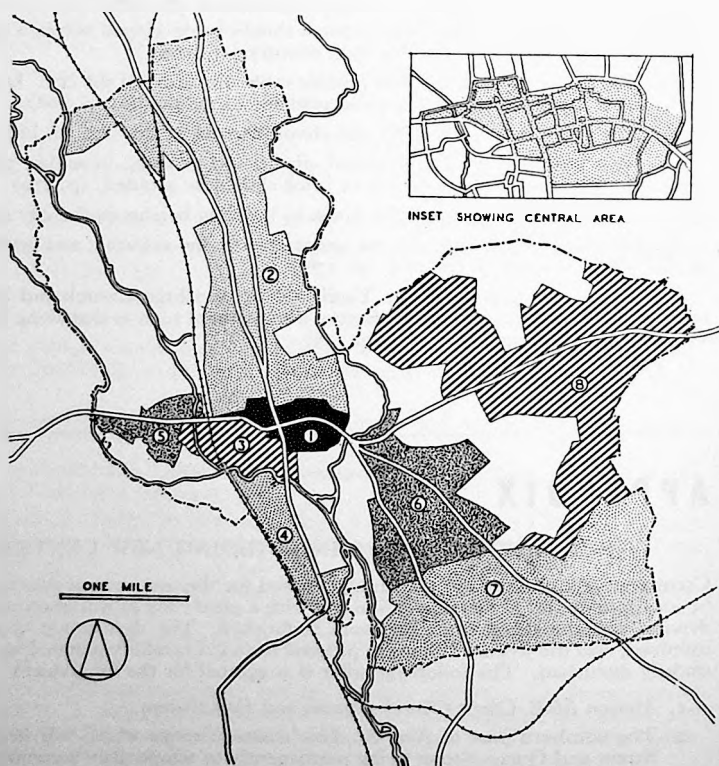


TABLE SHOWING
CENSUS OF RETAIL TRADES

CATEGORY	(1) Centre of City	(2) North Oxford and Jericho	(3) St. Ebbe's and Osney	(4) South Oxford	(5) West Oxford	(6) Number west of Magdalen Bridge	(7) Cowley Rd., Iffley Rd., and St. Clement's	(8) Iffley Village and Cowley Village	(9) Headington and Marston	(10) Number east of Magdalen Bridge	CITY TOTAL
FOOD											
Bakers and Flour Confectioners . . .	13	11	6	3	—	33	14	4	6	24	57
Fish and Poultry	10	2	2	1	1	16	3	1	2	6	22
Fried Fish	—	1	4	—	—	5	5	4	4	13	18
Greengrocers and Florists	35	15	4	4	2	60	15	9	13	37	97
Corn and Seed Merchants	3	—	—	1	—	4	2	—	1	3	7
Grocers and Provisions	17	19	8	8	7	59	26	20	23	69	128
Butchers	19	9	2	2	1	33	13	9	8	30	63
Tripe Dealers	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	1
Milk and Dairy Products	4	6	1	—	1	12	5	3	6	14	26
Sugar Confectioners	13	6	7	6	2	34	15	9	9	33	67
Tobacco	30	10	7	5	3	55	22	10	14	46	101
Off-licence, Wines, &c.	10	2	3	3	4	22	6	2	14	22	44
	154	81	44	33	21	333	127	71	100	298	631
CLOTHING											
Clothiers and Tailors	45	5	3	—	—	53	13	4	4	21	74
Men's and Boys' Outfitters	15	2	3	—	—	20	2	2	3	7	27
Women's and Children's Out- fitters	19	4	2	—	—	25	4	3	2	9	34
General Drapers	6	4	5	1	1	17	8	6	4	18	35
Wool	1	1	—	—	—	2	3	—	1	4	6
Footwear	21	6	5	3	—	35	9	5	3	17	52
Second-hand Clothes	1	1	1	1	—	4	3	1	1	5	9
Hosiery	7	—	—	—	—	7	—	—	2	2	9
	115	23	19	5	1	163	42	21	20	83	246
HOUSEHOLD GOODS											
China and Glass	6	1	—	—	—	7	2	1	1	4	11
Coal	11	7	3	4	—	25	6	5	2	13	38
Decorators' Supplies	5	3	3	1	—	12	6	4	3	13	25
Electric Supplies	10	3	1	—	—	14	3	—	4	7	21
Furnishings	8	2	4	—	—	14	9	1	4	14	28
Soft Furnishings	8	2	4	—	—	14	9	1	3	13	27
Furniture, Antiques, &c.	20	7	5	2	—	34	10	—	1	11	45
Gas Appliances	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Ironmongery, Ironware	3	6	5	—	—	14	7	2	5	14	28
Cutlery and Tools	5	—	—	—	—	5	1	—	1	2	7
Garden Furniture	1	1	—	—	—	2	—	1	1	2	4
Sewing Machines	2	—	—	—	—	2	1	1	—	2	4
Music and Instruments	5	—	—	—	—	5	1	—	—	1	6
Radio and Gramophones	7	3	2	—	—	12	4	1	3	8	20
	92	35	27	7	—	161	59	17	28	104	265

(Table continued overleaf)

CATEGORY	(1) Centre of City	(2) North Oxford and Jericho	(3) St. Ebbe's and Osney	(4) South Oxford	(5) West Oxford	(6) Cowley Rd., Iffley Rd., and St. Clement's	(7) Iffley Village and Cowley Village	(8) Headington and Marston	CITY TOTAL
MISCELLANEOUS GOODS									
Chemists	11	6	—	1	1	19	5	7	36
Opticians and Goods	10	3	—	—	—	13	1	3	17
Photographic	2	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	2
Jewellery, Clocks	13	4	2	—	—	19	3	3	25
Leather Goods	4	—	1	—	—	5	—	—	6
Motor-cars, Cycles, &c.	12	5	5	1	—	23	2	4	30
Pictures and Art	4	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	4
Sports Goods	8	1	—	—	—	9	2	1	12
Cycles and Accessories, &c.	11	5	2	—	1	19	6	2	30
Games and Toys	2	1	—	—	—	3	1	2	7
Prams, &c.	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	3
Stationers and Books	25	8	1	—	—	34	7	3	47
Newsagents	9	6	1	1	—	17	7	4	33
Business Equipment, &c.	4	—	—	—	—	4	1	—	5
Fancy Goods	2	1	—	—	—	3	1	—	4
Arts and Crafts	4	1	—	—	—	5	1	—	7
General Shops	1	15	10	10	6	42	26	4	89
Dealers	—	1	2	—	—	3	1	1	5
Multiple Stores	3	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	3
Surgical Appliance Makers	2	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	2
	128	57	24	13	8	230	66	36	367
SERVICES									
Cafés and Dining-rooms	32	5	2	—	1	40	4	6	56
Milk Bars	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	2
Dyers and Cleaners	9	3	1	1	—	14	3	3	21
Clothes Repairers	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Laundries	—	2	1	—	—	3	1	4	8
Garages (Petrol/Oil)	8	10	3	3	1	25	8	5	41
Hairdressers	20	14	7	1	2	44	14	9	79
Libraries	4	2	—	—	—	6	1	1	9
Photographers	5	—	—	—	—	5	1	—	6
Public Houses	22	28	20	4	5	79	16	12	117
Shoe Repairers	4	10	5	3	—	22	15	7	49
Tickets and Messengers	3	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	3
Undertakers	2	4	4	—	—	10	3	1	15
Monumental Masons	2	—	—	—	1	3	4	—	7
Printers	12	1	4	—	—	17	6	2	25
	124	79	47	12	10	272	78	46	439

SUMMARY

CATEGORY	1	2	3	4	5	West	6	7	8	East	TOTAL
Food	154	81	44	33	21	333	127	71	100	298	631
Clothing	115	23	19	5	1	163	42	21	20	83	246
Household Goods	92	35	27	7	—	161	59	17	28	104	265
Miscellaneous	128	57	24	13	8	230	66	35	36	137	367
Services	124	79	47	12	10	272	78	43	46	167	439
	613	275	161	70	40	1,159	372	187	230	789	1,948

APPENDIX 4

(a) CARFAX TRAFFIC CENSUS

Friday, 19 July 1946

M = Motor-cars and light vans; L = Lorries; O = Omnibuses and Coaches;
S = Slow traffic, horsedrawn; B = Bicycles

HIGH STREET SECTION

HOUR	TURNING LEFT						STRAIGHT						TURNING RIGHT						GRAND TOTAL
	M	L	O	S	B	Total	M	L	O	S	B	Total	M	L	O	S	B	Total	
8 a.m.-9 a.m.	59	8	4	1	335	407	115	34	27	—	696	872	67	29	29	1	420	546	1,825
9 a.m.-10 a.m.	77	23	5	1	146	252	153	55	17	4	236	465	140	31	22	—	157	350	1,067
10 a.m.-11 a.m.	68	20	2	1	63	154	140	67	21	3	117	348	107	22	25	3	77	234	736
11 a.m.-12 noon	47	29	1	1	65	143	130	68	21	5	124	348	123	33	31	1	88	278	769
12 noon-1 p.m.	97	20	4	1	119	241	223	45	27	13	262	570	140	30	28	—	221	419	1,230
1 p.m.-2 p.m.	68	18	3	1	173	263	159	44	31	4	396	634	105	27	35	1	234	402	1,299
2 p.m.-3 p.m.	96	16	5	1	159	277	186	57	31	2	357	633	173	33	32	—	278	516	1,426
3 p.m.-4 p.m.	86	25	1	1	48	161	118	53	38	1	135	345	117	39	22	—	63	241	747
4 p.m.-5 p.m.	64	16	6	—	75	161	130	67	21	—	159	377	88	32	25	—	78	223	761
5 p.m.-6 p.m.	64	8	7	—	131	210	133	50	38	—	397	618	94	33	28	1	177	333	1,161
6 p.m.-7 p.m.	72	6	4	—	40	122	144	17	29	4	148	342	126	10	27	—	87	250	714
7 p.m.-8 p.m.	63	1	2	—	44	110	133	10	20	1	136	300	116	4	27	—	69	216	626
Total	861	190	44	8	1,398	2,501	1,764	567	321	37	3,163	5,852	1,396	323	333	7	1,949	4,008	12,361

QUEEN STREET SECTION

HOUR	TURNING LEFT						STRAIGHT						TURNING RIGHT						GRAND TOTAL
	M	L	O	S	B	Total	M	L	O	S	B	Total	M	L	O	S	B	Total	
8 a.m.-9 a.m.	19	8	—	1	32	60	106	71	23	7	261	468	22	7	6	—	25	60	588
9 a.m.-10 a.m.	32	14	—	1	56	103	120	64	26	4	86	300	26	7	5	2	21	61	464
10 a.m.-11 a.m.	27	4	—	1	47	79	116	47	28	3	110	304	18	16	4	—	23	61	444
11 a.m.-12 noon	46	10	—	—	57	113	113	47	23	—	116	299	34	11	5	1	26	77	489
12 noon-1 p.m.	35	7	—	1	70	113	135	48	27	—	297	507	19	4	6	—	24	53	673
1 p.m.-2 p.m.	24	5	—	—	57	86	113	30	24	1	229	397	24	6	7	—	28	65	548
2 p.m.-3 p.m.	34	8	—	1	52	95	103	52	25	3	140	323	27	10	8	1	24	70	488
3 p.m.-4 p.m.	30	6	—	—	42	78	103	36	31	—	161	331	39	17	7	—	10	73	482
4 p.m.-5 p.m.	25	5	—	—	61	91	138	36	38	—	281	493	34	8	6	—	39	87	671
5 p.m.-6 p.m.	33	5	—	—	53	91	180	24	31	—	539	774	27	2	8	—	49	86	951
6 p.m.-7 p.m.	32	1	—	—	25	58	173	11	33	—	266	483	27	1	4	—	35	67	608
7 p.m.-8 p.m.	24	—	—	—	19	43	110	3	35	—	124	272	13	1	3	—	12	29	344
Total	361	73	—	5	571	1,010	1,510	469	344	18	2,610	4,951	310	90	69	4	316	789	6,750

CORNMARKET STREET SECTION

HOUR	TURNING LEFT						STRAIGHT						TURNING RIGHT						GRAND TOTAL
	M	L	O	S	B	Total	M	L	O	S	B	Total	M	L	O	S	B	Total	
8 a.m.-9 a.m.	40	30	25	—	85	180	55	31	7	—	128	221	33	19	—	—	49	101	502
9 a.m.-10 a.m.	94	45	26	1	95	261	113	35	11	1	57	217	44	25	—	—	35	104	582
10 a.m.-11 a.m.	90	34	28	1	84	237	87	34	7	—	62	190	51	19	—	1	22	93	520
11 a.m.-12 noon	106	37	23	1	87	254	136	37	7	—	114	294	45	23	—	1	25	94	642
12 noon-1 p.m.	72	25	23	—	188	308	90	39	7	1	196	333	47	11	—	1	56	115	756
1 p.m.-2 p.m.	67	11	23	—	160	261	74	21	7	—	191	293	23	4	—	—	53	80	634
2 p.m.-3 p.m.	71	23	25	—	95	214	102	28	5	—	110	245	45	7	—	—	57	109	568
3 p.m.-4 p.m.	60	23	26	1	81	191	102	25	5	—	80	212	34	18	—	1	30	83	486
4 p.m.-5 p.m.	87	29	24	—	123	263	125	30	8	1	157	321	35	19	—	—	41	95	679
5 p.m.-6 p.m.	118	31	37	—	138	324	186	34	9	—	220	449	46	21	—	—	46	113	886
6 p.m.-7 p.m.	97	24	21	—	83	225	60	18	8	—	95	181	28	10	—	—	28	66	472
7 p.m.-8 p.m.	52	10	21	—	53	136	71	9	6	—	69	155	22	2	—	—	24	48	339
Total	954	322	302	4	1,272	2,854	1,201	341	87	3	1,479	3,111	453	178	—	4	466	1,101	7,066

ST. ALDATE'S SECTION

HOUR	TURNING LEFT						STRAIGHT						TURNING RIGHT						GRAND TOTAL
	M	L	O	S	B	Total	M	L	O	S	B	Total	M	L	O	S	B	Total	
8 a.m.-9 a.m.	58	13	5	2	108	186	89	46	6	2	187	330	73	28	1	1	137	240	756
9 a.m.-10 a.m.	51	11	8	—	78	148	105	51	6	3	114	279	93	27	5	3	80	208	635
10 a.m.-11 a.m.	52	18	6	—	47	123	121	29	7	3	106	266	97	23	2	1	64	187	576
11 a.m.-12 noon	45	10	4	3	82	144	109	45	5	1	101	261	96	24	2	—	85	207	612
12 noon-1 p.m.	45	6	2	1	61	115	113	15	6	1	161	296	83	10	2	2	145	242	653
1 p.m.-2 p.m.	39	4	6	—	107	156	106	41	7	—	271	425	96	22	2	1	199	320	901
2 p.m.-3 p.m.	49	10	5	3	66	133	105	21	7	—	187	320	70	22	3	—	76	171	624
3 p.m.-4 p.m.	63	19	6	1	52	141	133	13	8	3	108	265	92	18	3	—	71	184	590
4 p.m.-5 p.m.	54	21	6	—	48	129	136	32	9	—	119	296	119	32	5	2	122	280	705
5 p.m.-6 p.m.	56	12	9	1	80	158	116	20	4	—	168	308	146	14	5	—	365	530	996
6 p.m.-7 p.m.	51	5	3	—	46	105	146	13	7	—	107	273	121	10	14	—	172	317	695
7 p.m.-8 p.m.	41	—	7	—	42	90	67	5	6	—	86	164	67	7	3	—	84	161	415
Total . . .	604	129	67	11	817	1,628	1,346	331	78	13	1,715	3,483	1,153	237	47	10	1,600	3,047	8,158

(b) MAIN ROAD TRAFFIC, OXFORD, AUGUST 1938

*Average daily number of vehicles between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. recorded during the week
15-21 August 1938*

ROUTE NO.	CENSUS POINT	MOTOR CYCLES	PRIVATE CARS	PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLES	HEAVY GOODS	LIGHT GOODS	ALL MOTOR VEHICLES	PEDAL CYCLES
A. 34 Birmingham-Southampton	ABINGDON RD.: Bagley Wood, South of Bagley Cottages	239	2,433	134	314	166	3,286	475
	ABINGDON RD.: between Railway Bridge and Kennington Lane	316	3,164	195	347	282	4,304	2,199
	WOODSTOCK RD.: at first turn, Wolvercote	400	3,721	307	511	364	5,304	2,525
	WOODSTOCK RD.: crossing, west of Golf Course	263	2,430	106	459	164	3,422	722
A. 40 London-Cheltenham	LONDON RD.: The Plough, Wheatley Bridge	321	3,052	118	650	133	4,275	434
	LONDON RD.: between Bayswater Rd., and Forest Lodge	392	3,683	130	687	223	5,116	1,403
	NORTHERN BY-PASS: opposite Peasmoor Piece	248	2,307	23	538	107	3,225	596
	NORTHERN BY-PASS: East of Mill Lane, Eynsham	240	2,087	36	415	108	2,886	249
A. 420 Oxford-Faringdon	LONDON RD., HEADINGTON: corner of Bury Knowle	436	3,400	266	491	340	4,934	3,150
	MAGDALEN BRIDGE	1,186	10,858	1,620	1,479	1,507	16,660	19,237
	NEW ROAD: opposite County Offices	487	3,775	563	707	808	6,341	5,126
	SEACOURT HOUSE, Botley	449	4,104	301	495	443	5,795	3,096
	FARINGDON RD.: Rockley Copse, Besselsleigh	180	1,371	19	201	96	1,868	329
A. 423 Oxford-Henley	BANBURY RD.: Stratfield Farm, Gosford	390	3,961	120	669	237	5,377	1,384
	BANBURY RD.: Portland Rd. intersection	362	4,332	392	534	378	5,999	2,538
	ROSE HILL	353	3,073	233	365	314	4,338	1,957
A. 4095	THE SLADE: Cinnaminta Rd.	34	250	3	123	35	445	120
A. 4141 South Hinksey-Eynsham	SOUTHERN BY-PASS: half-way between North and South Hinksey	79	798	9	100	101	1,087	260
	EYNSHAM RD.: Swinford Bridge	47	315	77	43	35	517	433

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City of Oxford: outline planning scheme

- Existing development area
- Proposed development area
- Industrial area
- Existing public open space
- Proposed public open space
- Private open space (including allotments)
- Existing arterial roads
- New arterial roads
- Existing sub-arterial roads
- New sub-arterial roads
- Existing distributive roads
- New distributive roads



